

STUDIES IN  
VENETIAN HISTORY

HORATIO BROWN



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HISTORY OF VENICE



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# STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF VENICE

BY HORATIO F. BROWN

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To  
MY MOTHER



## P R E F A C E

THESE Studies are intended to illustrate Venetian history by dwelling upon certain crucial moments and significant episodes in the formation, growth, and decline of the Republic, by drawing attention to the Constitutional, Financial, Commercial, and Diplomatic development of the State, by an examination of its attitude towards the printing press, the book trade and ecclesiastical censorship, and by recounting picturesque events, such as the career of the alchemist Bragadin and the Spanish Conspiracy, which are symptomatic of decline. The history of Venice is full of similar topics, and these Essays do not pretend to cover the whole field; there remain vital questions like the Fourth Crusade, the colonial policy of the Republic, her navy, and so on, to which I may, perhaps, some time return. I have selected my subjects from every period of Venetian history, beginning with the foundation of Rialto and closing with the relations between the Republic and the Commonwealth of England.

Bishop Creighton once suggested that it might be possible to write the history of Venice in a series of Essays; he also added that "Venice is a *Kultur Stadt*, yet its *Kultur* is not obvious in its history. The impression which it produced on Europe in the days of its greatness is not the same impression which it now makes on the modern mind. Its æsthetic

appeal is not, as in the case of Florence, intimately associated with the events of its past history. Nor does its history, as such, harmonize with modern conceptions. Like its site, Venice lies remote from the rest of Europe, and owes its charm now to the same cause as it owed its greatness in the past." That is very true, and that is why in many cases I have chosen such comparatively unstudied regions as Venetian Diplomacy, Venetian Finance, the Venetian Constitution, Venetian Press Censorship, rather than the æsthetic aspects of Venice which Ruskin was the first to illustrate. The art of Venice belongs now to the world at large, but in the history of Venice, as perhaps of all other nations, it was not essential, it was a fringe, an adornment, the outcome of commercial and constitutional well-being; bearing the imprint of its birthplace, it is true, and eminently characteristic of Venice, but, nevertheless, merely a flower whose roots must be looked for elsewhere. Bishop Creighton made another illuminating remark on this subject. "The State of Venice," he said, "was a joint-stock company for the exploitation of the East." It is Venetian commerce which explains Venetian arms and diplomacy and gives unity and coherence to the history of the Republic. The history of Venetian commerce is still to be written.

Of these twenty Essays, ten appeared in *Venetian Studies*, published twenty years ago, and now long out of print; but each of those Essays has been rehandled and brought up to date. The publication of Herr Kretschmayr's learned *Geschichte von Venedig* (1905) has not led me to alter much in the Essay on the foundation of Rialto; but Sig. Battistella's book on *Carmagnola* entailed the entire rewriting of that Essay, while the study of fresh documents dis-



covered among the papers of the Inquisitori di Stato, to which I was directed by Mr. A. Hinds—documents that seem to have escaped the notice both of Ranke and of Romanin—made it necessary to rehandle the whole of the Essay on the Spanish Conspiracy, with a view to bringing out the important preliminary episode of Spinosa and Grimani. The remaining ten of these Essays have never appeared in book form. In compiling the present Volumes I have found it convenient to arrange the Essays in chronological order, so that they may help one another and the reader.

Canon Lonsdale Ragg, by calling my attention to the name of Fra Marino in a brochure in the *Biblioteca Marciana*, led to the discovery of the original Venetian Index of 1549, whose existence has been denied by Mendham, Reusch, and Mr. Putnam in his recent work on *The Censorship of Rome* (1906). I have printed *in extenso* the documents which accompany this Index; the list of books and of authors is identical with Vergerio's well-known edition.

Seven of these Essays are based, almost entirely, on documents in the archives and libraries of Venice which have not hitherto been used by historians, and this has led to copious quotation in many cases; while throughout the work reference has been made, where possible, to original sources.

HORATIO F. BROWN.

CA' TORRESELLA, VENICE.

May, 1907.



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## NOTE

OF the following Essays, "The Constitution of the Venetian Republic" and "Shakspeare and Venice" appeared in *The Quarterly Review*; "Marino Falier," "Political Assassination," "The Commercial and Fiscal Policy of the Republic," and "Venetian Diplomacy at the Sublime Porte," appeared in *The Edinburgh Review*; "The Index Librorum Prohibitorum and the Censorship of the Press" appeared in *The Westminster Review*; "A Printer-Publisher of the Sixteenth Century" and "The Marriage of Ibraim Pasha" in *The Atlantic Monthly*; "An International Episode" in *The Cornhill*. My thanks are due to the proprietors for leave to reprint. "Paolo Sarpi" was delivered as the Taylorian Lecture at Oxford in 1895, and appeared in the Taylorian volume of *Studies in European History*, and also in *The Scottish Review*.

# STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF VENICE

## The City of Rialto

Quid est mare? refugium in periculis.—ALCUIN

THE origin of that singular city we now call Venice is one of the most obscure problems in Italian history. Tradition marks the incursion of Attila as the birth-moment of the republic, which was destined to grow in silence—fed from the East—during the Middle Ages; to embark upon the troubled waters of Renaissance politics; to put forth the blossom of a glorious art; to stand as a bulwark for Europe against the Ottoman power; to flame in sinister splendour down the road of corruption; and to be extinguished at last—the oldest state in Europe—by the convulsions of the French Revolution. But long before Attila came with his Huns, before the Goths or the Lombards or the Franks seized on the plains of Northern Italy, those mud islands of the lagoon must have had their population—a race of fishermen, poor, hardy, independent, sea-bred and sea-nurtured. Cassiodorus, secretary of Theodoric the Great, writes to the Venetians of the Lagoons as to a people who had already achieved a certain amount of unity and self-government. From this famous epistle of A.D. 523 we gather the impression of a community simple, industrious, republican, and we obtain our earliest view of the Venetian villages<sup>1</sup>—the houses

<sup>1</sup> “Viminibus enim flexilibus illigatis, terrena illis soliditas aggregatur . . . proinde naves quas, more animalium, vestris parietis illigastis, diligenti cura reficite.”



rising on the shoals, saved from destruction in the ever-shifting waters by the frail palisade of wattled osier. There is a breath of the salt, free air in the secretary's phrase, "Hic vobis, aquatiliū avium more, domus est."

But no eye noted the first low huts, built of mud bricks, nor measured those light and shallow boats which stood, stabled like horses, at the door of every house; no historian traced the internal growth of these fishing stations; and we have been left to suppose, what has often been stated, that the refugees from the mainland, flying before the frequent foreign occupations, found the islands, where they sought shelter, deserted mud-banks out at sea. This could not have been the case. Venice was not peopled solely by exiles from Aquileia, Oderzo, Concordia, or Padua. Through the obscurity of the records which have reached us, we can trace a long-continued struggle raging inside Venice,<sup>1</sup> before a thorough fusion of the original and the immigrant populations could be

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this essay I shall use the name "Venice" for the whole lagoon district, reserving "Rialto" for the city we now call Venice. It is certain that the word *Venecia*, *Venetia*, was used to indicate three distinct localities at different periods in its history.

(a) The oldest use of the word applied to the district between the western confines of Pannonia and the river Adda. (See Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lang.* ii. 14: "Venetia enim non solum in paucis insulis, quas nunc Venetias dicimus, constat, sed ejus terminus a Pannoniæ finibus usque adduam fluvium protelatur." Monticolo, *Chronache Veneziane antichissime. Cronaca de singulis Patriarchis nove aquilleie*, p. 5: "Cujus Venecie terminus a Pannonia usque ad Adam fluvium protelatur." Ibid. *La Cronaca Ven. del Diacono Giovanni*, p. 59: "Siquidem Venetie due sunt prima est illa que in antiquitatum hystoriis continentur, que a Panonie terminis usque ad adda fluvium protelatur, cujus et Aquilegia civitas extitit caput.")

(b) The second use of the word indicated the townships of the littoral, which were united under the first Doge Paoluccio and formed the ducato Veneto. This is the sense in which John the Deacon invariably uses the word: "Secunda vero Venecia est illa, quam apud insulas scimus que Adriatici maris collecta sinu interfluentibus undis positione mirabili, multitudine populi feliciter habitant." (See also Monticolo's edit. pp. 64: "Gradus . . . quemadmodum antique

brought about. There were years of quarrelling between Malamocco, where the older race predominated, and Heraclea, peopled chiefly by refugees from Oderzo. The union was not effected until the city of Rialto,<sup>1</sup> the city we now call Venice, rose to pre-eminence on the ruins of Heraclea and of Malamocco, as the monument of Pipin's attack and defeat. The choice of Rialto as the seat of the government is the starting-point of sequent Venetian history. Around Rialto we gather all those memories which are chiefly associated with the name of Venice—the wealth, the splendour, the pride of the Adriatic's Queen; Rialto floating on the water, a city that is "always just putting out to sea."

Venecie Aquilegia, ita et ista totius nove Venetie caput et metropolis fore dinoscitur"; p. 101: "Obelierius audacter Veneciam intravit," when recording Obelerio's entry into Malamocco, etc.)

(c) The third use of the word is that which is applied to the city that we now call Venice. That city was originally known as Rialto, *Rivoaltus*, and its port was called San Nicolò di Rialto. Rialto continued to be the correct indication of place in notarial deeds till quite late in the history of the republic.

It is very uncertain when the word *Venecia* was first applied to the city we call Venice. The penny of the Emperor Louis I., the Pious (814-840), bears the word VENECIA, so does the penny of Lothair I. (840-855), and we have another penny, also of Louis I., with the legend VENECIAS MONETA. These coins are certainly from an imperial mint, probably Pavia; but in spite of the analogy of Pavia, Lucca, and Treviso—where the name refers to a city—we are inclined to believe that *Venecia* and *Venecias* here refer to the district, not to the town. Between the years 855 and 880 Venice herself issued a penny with the legend XPE SALVA VENECIAS, in which we may be pretty sure that *Venecias* means the district. We may note that there is a difference, however, between *Venecia* and *Venecias*. The proper style of the community down to the year 1421 was *Veneciarum communitas*. Monticolo (*Nuovo Arch. Ven.* iii. p. 386 note) says: "The earliest use of the name *Venecia*, as applied to the city, is, as far as I am aware, to be found in the thirteenth-century Cod. Vat. No. 5273, in a passage preceding the *Annales Breves*, fol. 8. A.: 'Anno domini quatuor centum viginti anum edificatio Venecie.'"

<sup>1</sup> The name probably means "deep stream," *rivus altus*; it may possibly be derived from *ripa alta*, or high bank, or even from the name of a confluent of the Brenta called Prealto.

Rialto was the city of compromise and of survival—of compromise between those discordant elements which constituted the home population of the fishing villages; of survival between two great external and antagonistic powers, the East and the West. On one side of Venice lay the mythic splendour, the dim grandeur, the august name of “the Golden Emperor”; on the other the barbaric energy, the juvenile vigour, the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the Frankish king. Constantinople represented the civilization of the world, the long-inherited lordship of the Cæsars; while the court of Charles the Great seemed instinct with the might of some unmeasured natural force, eruptive and volcanic. The Eastern Empire was old<sup>1</sup> and mythical through age; but it still retained some of its pristine efficiency, though the hand of sovereignty began to fall, here and there, from the government. The Frankish power, on the contrary, bounded forward with the impetuosity of youth; yet destiny reserved for it too, although so young, only a brief life in Italy. It fell to pieces on the death of its creator; and “Charlemagne, with all his peerage,” faded away into the shadowy region of poetical myth. Between these two forces Italy, and with her Venice, pursued their task of self-development. The action and reaction of East and West determined the evolution of Venice; and Rialto emerged as the result of their operation on that portion of the Roman world.

The Eastern Empire, though surely setting towards dissolution, still presented the greatest power in existence. Its longevity, its centuries of vigorous old age, were continually proving how massively the structure of the Roman constitution had been framed.

<sup>1</sup> “τὴν γραῦν τὴν βασιλείαν, ὡς κόρην χρυσοσπάταλον, ὡς μαργαροφοροῦσαν.” Manasses in *Constant.* vii. I use the phrase “Eastern Empire” in the sense in which it is admitted to be convenient and justifiable by Prof. Bury (*History of the Later Roman Empire*—London: Macmillan, 1889—vol. i. p. vii.).



The repeated recovery of vital force, the reorganization of the whole system, the new leases of life effected by Constantine, by Heraclius, by Leo the Isaurian, by Nicephorus, and by Basil, demonstrated the solid ribwork of the Roman body politic. Under the protection of the law we may believe that the subjects of the Eastern Empire were well governed. Its chroniclers have chosen to dwell upon the exceptions, recording, chiefly, instances of imperial caprice; but the enormous wealth of the merchants would rather prove that property was secure, commerce active, and justice strictly administered. Nicephorus I. could never have incurred such a torrent of obloquy for his alleged extortions, nor could Theodora have bequeathed so vast a treasury to her son Michael the Drunkard, had the people been impoverished, or the country ruined, by years of fiscal oppression. The gigantic scale of the imperial operations for the encouragement of agriculture shows at once the power of the emperors and their earnestness in good government. We have only to call to mind the colony of two hundred thousand Slavs transferred by Constantine V. to Bithynia, and the corresponding establishment of Asiatic agriculturists on the borders of Slavonia, to perceive that the Roman emperor was both the successor of the Great King and the ruler bred in the political principles of the early Cæsars. And the same profundity of resource appeared in the military, no less than in the financial administration. Constantine Copronymus found no difficulty, after the loss of an army and fleet numbering two thousand transports, in taking the field against the Bulgarians the following year with a fresh force of eighty thousand men and two thousand vessels.<sup>1</sup>

During the eighth and ninth centuries the Eastern Empire was, on the whole, prosperous. Nor could the continual dynastic changes upset, or even seriously shake, the structural strength of the constitution. The

<sup>1</sup> See Finlay's *History of Greece* (Oxford: 1877), vol. ii. p. 230.

emergence of successful soldiers like Leo, of feeble princes like the Amorian family, of pure adventurers like Basil I., left the general lines of government unchanged. That policy of careful finance and vigorous military administration, initiated by Augustus, and laid down by him as the basis of imperial authority, was maintained, for the most part, by those who subsequently bore the title of emperor. The maxims of Cæsarship were held by them as something hardly dependent upon their personal character. The prince was not to be confounded with the administration; that was hereditary and traditional, the expression of the Roman idea. No doubt the vigour and efficiency of the government varied with the qualities of the Augustus, but the substantial principles never altered. And so, distinct from the national life, severed from the interests of the people and almost unobserved by them, there existed the life of the Great Palace, the private economy of Cæsar as sovereign of a court, not as minister of finance or emperor of the Roman armies.

We know more of this palace life than we know of the imperial executive, for the chroniclers have busied themselves over the details of it. We see it sumptuous and fantastic under Theophilus, the emperor who played Paris to the virgins assembled in his stepmother's house, and chose his wife by the gift of a golden apple.<sup>1</sup> He is the Augustus whose chief glory lay in building the Palace of Bryas,<sup>2</sup> an imitation of the caliph's home in Bagdad. The porphyry chamber for the lying-in of empresses; the long colonnades with tessellated floors and marble pillars made for cool promenades; the sleeping-

<sup>1</sup> Symeon Mag. *Ann. Corpus Script. Hist. Byz.* (Bonn : 1838), tom. 46, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Sym. Mag. *op. cit.* p. 421 ; Theophanes, *Contin. Corp. Hist. Byz.* (Bonn), tom. 46, pp. 86-91 ; Leo, *Script. Hist. Byz.* (Venetiis : 1729), tom. vi. p. 362 ; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, capp. 52, 53.

rooms arranged to suit each season of the year; the dining-halls named Erôs and Margarite; the golden tree with artificial birds that piped and fluttered in the branches; the organs hidden in the ceilings that played soft music while the emperor passed below; the system of sun telegraphs that flashed their messages from the borders of the empire and wrote them on a disc inside the council hall; the telephone and whispering gallery that joined one corner of the gardens to another—these and a hundred other such toys and curious inventions occupied the leisure and amused the fancy of Theophilus the Unfortunate. Or we may see the court bigoted and fanatical, ruled by monks, clamorous with arguments in favour or in condemnation of image-worship; settling the nature of the Trinity by blows and blood; engrossed by no more actual care. Constantine VI. lost his throne for a breach of the canon law in divorcing his wife to marry Theodota; and earlier still, in the year 669, the troops of the Orient Theme, catching the religious infection from their chief Constantine IV., claimed that the emperor's two brothers should also be crowned, and thus a Trinity would reign on earth, the counterpart of that in heaven. Leo V., the Armenian, owed his death partly to a scruple about Christmas Day which forbade him to slay his enemy, Michael, before receiving the sacrament, and partly to the military precision with which he attended matins and joined in the psalms. The assassins recognized the emperor by his deep, sonorous voice, and stabbed him before the altar in the chill grey Christmas morning. Or once again, and in opposition to this passionate earnestness in matters of dogmatic dispute, we see the court scurrilous and ribald under Michael the Drunkard, the emperor who made Gryllus, his buffoon, ride in procession through the streets of Constantinople, robed in the patriarch's vestments, seated on a white mule, and attended by eleven mimic metropolitans chosen from among



Augustus's boon companions.<sup>1</sup> Michael himself followed in the train, and the rout sang profane songs and obscene psalms to popular hymn tunes; while, in mockery of the sacred cup, they administered a loathsome draught of vinegar and mustard to any among the crowd whom they could catch and compel to drink it.

But whatever the personal character of the prince may have been, frivolous or passionate or profane, affected the well-being of the people very remotely. The stories which crept out from the palace merely served to fill men's minds with curious astonishment and wonder as for something heard in a dream, and helped to create that atmosphere of mystery and fascination which made the private life of the emperors take place side by side with tales of Haroun al Raschid and the caliphs of Bagdad.

And the almost superhuman greatness of the imperial title, coupled with the number of adventurers who attained to it, gave the popular imagination ample food for the construction of myths. The current version of the facts alone was often romantic enough. Leo the Isaurian, while yet a poor lad, known by the name of Conon, determined to leave his native hills to try his fortune in the richer lands below. One day, as he was journeying across the plain, he rested from the noontide heat in a grove of ilex, near a spring of water, and turned his pack-mule loose to graze. As he lay upon the turf he found that he was not alone, but that two other travellers were also resting in the shade. From their talk he learned that they were Jews and astrologers, and the two strangers, taken by the beauty and grace and strength of Conon, readily satisfied his desire to know what the future might have in store for him. To his astonishment he heard that he was destined to rule the Eastern Empire; and in return for their brilliant forecast, the Jews exacted a promise that when Conon should come to

<sup>1</sup> Theophanes, *Continuat.* p. 124; Sym. Mag. p. 437.

the throne, he would root out the idolatrous worship of images that now disgraced God's Church. The prophecy was fulfilled ; and Conon became the second refounder of the Roman Empire.

The legend of Basil I., though more closely related to the truth, is hardly less picturesque. Born a poor groom, but gifted with beauty, great strength, and a singular magnetic power which made the most intractable horses quiet at his touch, Basil determined to leave his father's farm to push his way in the large world. His wanderings brought him to Patras, where he fell under the notice of a rich widow named Danielis. Through her kindness he accumulated money enough to purchase estates in Macedonia, and he became a member of the family by the religious ceremony of "adelphosis" with the widow's son. But Patras offered too narrow a field for Basil's growing ambition. He quitted the Peloponnese for Constantinople. Another tradition of his life, but one which hardly accords with the story of his Macedonian properties, represents the young groom entering the capital alone one evening, with a wallet on his back and nothing in his pockets. He went to sleep on the steps of a church near the gate. That night the priest of the church was troubled with a dream which told him to go out and bring the emperor in, for he lay sleeping at the door. Twice he obeyed, but found no emperor, only a young man lying on the church steps asleep. The third time, to exorcise the dream, he roused up Basil, brought him into the house, and gave him supper and a bed. The young groom rose rapidly into favour through his skill in horse-training, till he at length attracted the notice of the court. His fortunes were secured when one day, in the presence of the Emperor Michael, he wrestled with a Bulgarian champion and overthrew him. Michael made him his prime favourite, and never took his riotous pleasures but with Basil at his side. At last two successful murders, first of Bardas Cæsar and then

of Michael himself, placed Basil on the throne. He founded the great Basilian dynasty and reigned himself for nineteen years.

There are many other stories from the lives of emperors, patriarchs, and generals to be met with in the Byzantine chroniclers. They are half real, picturesque, and all deeply tinged with Eastern fancy; but they have little connection with the movement of the government. They appealed to the imagination in the distant provinces of the empire—in Venice or in Naples, for example—making Constantinople a place where men desired to go, a city of dreamland wonders. They created a strong bias of curiosity, of attraction, of sympathy in favour of Byzantium, as opposed to the repulsion exercised by the nearer and more positive power of the Lombards or the Franks. The doge's sons sought Constantinople when they could; the doges themselves coveted honorary titles<sup>1</sup> conferred by the emperor; the people answered Pipin's summons to surrender with the cry, "We choose to be the subjects of the Roman king, and not of you."

But, in spite of the emotional bonds which bound the distant members of the empire to Constantinople as their head, the hand of government began to fall away from many provinces. Italy was lost. Venice and Naples, though they acknowledged the suzerainty of Constantinople, enjoyed an independence virtually complete. Venice was in a position to ignore Byzantium when it suited her to do so; to continue uninterruptedly her own line of development, and yet to make use of her nominal dependence as a bulwark against invasion from the west. Only in the extreme east the great empire still stood firm, keeping the Saracens always at bay. Under the shelter of its unconscious protection the nations of modern Europe found leisure to ferment, to seethe and settle down; taking slowly that form under which we recognize

<sup>1</sup> Armingaud, *Venise et le Bas Empire* (Paris: 1868).



them now.<sup>1</sup> This is the eternal benefit conferred by the Eastern Empire. Venice, when her day of power arrived, performed, though on a smaller scale, a similar service for civilization by her almost single-handed opposition to the Turk.

The forces at work upon the other side of Venice, towards the west, operating upon her in such a way as to determine the evolution of her independence and the creation of Rialto, were the powers of the Lombard and the Frank. But Italy herself modified the action of these powers that came in contact with her. And perhaps the most powerful, the most Italian factor in all Italy, was the Church of Rome. It is, therefore, by observing the policy of the Church and of the popes that we obtain the most accurate view of the part played by the foreigners in the development of the peninsula.<sup>2</sup> When the suppressive weight of the empire was lifted from Italy, partly through the decay of the imperial power, partly by the removal of the emperor to Constantinople and the consequent accentuation of the Roman See, a rebound towards individuality and self-government manifested itself. In isolated portions of Italy, in Venice, in Rome, in Naples, Amalfi, and Bari, the people became conscious of a passionate desire for self-realization, for separation, for the assertion of their own peculiar qualities, which the empire had so long suppressed. But these fragments were scattered and weak. Byzantium was not dead; an exarch still ruled in Ravenna; Lombardy, Beneventum, and Spoleto were in the power of a foreigner who would not be sorry to extend his borders. Politically, and quite apart from any religious considerations, salvation could come from the Church alone. The Goths had respected the Eternal City; the Lombards never effected a thorough conquest.

<sup>1</sup> See Rambaud, *L'Empire Grec* (Paris: 1870).

<sup>2</sup> I must acknowledge my debt to Ferrari's brilliant essay, *Storia delle Rivoluzioni d'Italia* (Milan: 1870).

Round the See of Rome the democratic impulse, an impulse by no means foreign to the essence of the Church, might crystallize and grow solid. A front of resistance might be offered to their foes if the pope would consent to become the core of a federation of states that aimed, first and foremost, at individuality, but who were forced to seek some central support upon which to lean until their own position should be secured. The Church itself, however, no less than the other fragments of Italy, obeyed the state-making appetite and sought a temporal dominion. The opportunity seemed favourable to its designs. But one imperative condition lay behind, tacitly implied by all who demanded assistance from the Church: the condition that the Church itself should not endeavour to become sovereign at the expense of its confederates; that the pope should never attempt to make himself doge or prince or emperor; in fact, that the Holy See should allow its spiritual authority to be used, as long as it might be required, for a bulwark against Byzantium, Pavia, or any other absorbing power, so that behind it Venice, Naples, Amalfi might pursue their own self-chosen course of development. Italy stood with the Church or against it as it showed readiness to satisfy the imperious desire of the people, or gave signs that it, too, was seeking a temporal power for itself. So long as the pope consented to act as a shelter to the embryonic communities and shared the struggle for individual preservation, now against the Lombards, and now against the Eastern Empire, he commanded the sympathy of Italy. But the moment he manifested the least disposition to yield for his own advantage to either of the regnant powers, or on the slightest suspicion that he was aiming at sovereignty, the people threw their passions and their action violently into the opposite scale.

The popes accepted the position; but the condition imposed upon them was just one they could not fulfil.



For, while undertaking the duties of confederate chiefs, while consenting to be no more than *primus inter pares*, they could not escape the spirit of the age acting upon them in their narrower political capacities as heads of the Church and individual men. They embraced the policy of creating a temporal dominion, and Italy swayed in obedience to the fluctuations of their course. The danger that beset the popes from the Lombards and from the East determined their action as a continual see-saw. They stood now with Pavia, achieving a little more liberty as they saw Byzantium weak; now with Constantinople, bolstering up the imperial authority if the Lombards showed a tendency to encroach. All the time their conduct was eagerly scanned by confederate Italy. The iconoclasm of Leo the Isaurian, condemned as a heresy by the Western Church, and dividing the East into two furious and hostile camps, presented a favourable opportunity to deal a blow at the emperor's ascendancy in Italy. Accordingly, Gregory II. bound himself in close alliance with Liutprand, King of the Lombards. The pope preached the enormity of iconoclasm, and the king lent him the secular arm wherewith to give weight to his words. The Lombard troops entered the exarchate and drove the exarch Paul out of Ravenna to seek refuge in Venice. But the Pope immediately found himself compelled to undo his own work. For Liutprand claimed the Pentapolis as his own, by right of conquest. This extension of Lombard power disclosed a danger to the independent growth of papal authority. A rapid backward sweep took place. The restoration of Paul to his exarchate, at the instance of the pope and by the help of Venice, marked the extent of the reaction against the Lombards.

The head of the Church was now placed in difficulties. His struggles to keep the balance adjusted between the two forces which dominated Italy, a struggle from which he hoped to emerge sovereign,

had raised up for the Church an enemy, both in Pavia and in Constantinople. Liutprand's vigour infused new life into the Lombards, and his conquest of Ravenna reawakened the desire for enlargement; his successors were sure to follow the lines laid down by him. On the other hand, Byzantium, though by no means strong, had gained considerable weight in Italy, thanks to the reaction in her favour which sent the exarch Paul back to Ravenna. Venice experienced a shock of alarm at the results of the pope's Lombard policy. The capture of the Pentapolis threw her into the arms of Constantinople, and there she was held by the commercial privileges granted to her on the restoration of the exarch. For the moment she stood isolated from the Church and suspicious. The pope had shown his hand a little too openly. Under these circumstances the Church was forced to look for support elsewhere. To restore the equation between itself, Pavia, and Byzantium, the introduction of a fourth factor became necessary. The victory of Charles Martel, saving Western Christendom as it did, drew all eyes to the race of the Franks. The popes selected them as their champions for the next move in the game. Zacharias sanctioned—as far as such sanction had any meaning—the substitution of the Carolingian for the Merovingian dynasty. The house of Charles Martel became the defender of the Church; and Pipin I.'s coronation by Stephen, at Paris, sealed the alliance.

The results of this union were at once felt in the peninsula. The Lombards now learned the quarter whence danger threatened. The Church pointed clearly to the Franks as the new race that was girding itself behind the Alps, to try its fortune too in battle for that phantom Helen of the Middle Ages, the crown of Italy. The Lombard kingdom grew restless under the presentiment of death. Astolfo, Liutprand's successor, by his decided enmity alarmed the pope, and warned him to precipitate the ruin of

his foes. In 755 Pipin came to Italy. He is said to have made a gift of the Pentapolis and the exarchate, which he took from Astolfo, to his ally of the Holy See. But though Astolfo was humbled, the Lombards were not annihilated. No sooner had Pipin left Italy, than Desiderius, the last king in Pavia, prepared himself to recover the lost cities and to chastise the pope. The Lombards made their final effort to retain their kingdom. Desiderius occupied Comacchio, the Pentapolis, the city of Ferrara. He pressed on to Gubbio and Urbino; he even threatened Rome itself. But at Viterbo he hesitated before the excommunication hurled against him by the Holy See.<sup>1</sup> The Lombards had made the fatal mistake of becoming orthodox; they could not worship the pope and fight him too. Desiderius recoiled and was lost. In the year 774 Adrian sent for his ally, Charles the Great, who had succeeded his father, Pipin. Charles crossed the Cenis, blockaded Desiderius in Pavia, and, after a protracted siege, captured both the city and the king.

The pope had advanced rapidly towards the object which the Church desired. By the help of the Franks it now seemed probable that a temporal dominion would be added to the spiritual empire of the Holy See. Though the donation of Pipin never took effect, yet its suggestion marked in unmistakable characters the ambition of the pope. He was violating the tacit understanding upon which alone he enjoyed the political sympathy and support of Italy. Everywhere appeared signs of reaction. In Venice, in Ravenna, in its own city of Rome, the people protested against the political direction which the Church threatened to impose on the country. The popes passed through stormy years of hostility from their own subjects, until at length Leo III. was assailed by the mob, beaten, imprisoned, and only escaped the loss of his tongue by a secret flight to Charles the Great at Paderborn.

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Annali d' Italia*, ad ann. 772.



And now the consummation was almost reached. Charles brought back the pope to Rome, and there he himself was crowned Emperor of the West, King of the Franks and Lombards. On the other hand, Leo received the temporal sovereignty over Parma, Reggio, Mantua, the exarchate, Istria, Venice, Beneventum, and Spoleto.<sup>1</sup> The Church and the Franks concocted the pact and donation between them. Leo believed that he had restored the Augustan Cæsars in the person of Charles; Charles believed that he could confer a veritable kingdom upon his ally the pope. But both beliefs were groundless, and proved to be so almost on the day of their birth. Charles never was a Roman emperor; he did not so much as reside in Italy. The pope never could be a reigning prince; he could not so much as levy a tax. This country which they were partitioning so lightly had never been consulted, and its voice was of paramount importance. The pope and the emperor had no sooner conceived the idea of an Italy based upon their double power than their mutual gifts began to prove themselves unsubstantial. The emperor made a present of that which was not his to give; the pope committed treason against the passions and the instincts of the people. He sought to become a king where no kings were to be. The country swung around in violent contradiction to the Church and to the Franks. In every direction rose the cry of "Save the country," and the pope was left standing alone, deserted by those upon whom he endeavoured to impose himself. But the pact and donation, though wanting in solid reality, stood over Italy with all the force and potency of an idea; always in evidence; passing from lip to lip; fixed in the imagination; a permanent threat against the desire for self-effectuation, the state-forming appetite which was swaying the peninsula. Their effect remained as a determining factor in the course adopted by such communities as Venice; their

<sup>1</sup> Anastasius, quoted by Ferrari, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 122.

power to affect the political imagination endured just because they were an idea and not a reality, therefore more difficult to refute, to negative, to destroy.

The early history of Venice illustrates accurately the movements of an Italian state labouring towards independence, between the triple forces of the East, and West, and the Church. For Venice lay, in a certain sense, at the heart of the struggle; she formed a part of the Byzantine Empire, and she had been included in Charles's donation to the Church; she felt the full stress of the conflict. It has been well said that "Venice on her *lidi* stood exposed to every wind." The interest of her earliest development depends on the courage and determination with which she resisted all conquest, Gothic, Lombard, Byzantine, or Frank. Venice enjoyed a position both peculiar and ill-defined. She acknowledged a titular allegiance to the court of Byzantium, and yet by her acts she recognized the virtual supremacy of the barbarian kingdoms on the mainland of Italy. Her tribunes received orders from Cassiodorus, and, later on, her first doge paid tribute to Liutprand in return for certain privileges of commerce. On the other hand, her public deeds were superscribed with the name of the Eastern Emperor. Yet neither Byzantium nor Ravenna nor Pavia could claim the lagoons as an undisputed portion of their empires. The twelve confederate islands<sup>1</sup> were in

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Diacono, *Cronaca Veneziana*, in the *Cronache Veneziane antichissime*, edit. Giovanni Monticolo (Roma : 1890), vol. i. pp. 63-6. This is the chronicle known as the *Chronicon Venetum* of Sagornino, edit. by Zanetti, *Venetii*, MDCCLXV. The Deacon John lived in the later years of the tenth and the earlier part of the eleventh century, and is therefore one of the earliest Venetian authorities we possess. He was employed diplomatically by the Doge Pietro II., Orseolo; and the first authentic mention we have of him is in the privilege granted to the doge by the Emperor Otho III., and dated May 1, 995. We hear of him again in a privilege granted by Henry II. to the Abbess of San Zaccaria in 1018. The twelve island townships, as given by the Deacon, are Grado,

fact attempting to steer a difficult course towards independence of any power. These twelve islands, lying close together along the shore of the Adriatic, formed the nucleus of what was to be the state of Venice. It is probable that, originally, they were little more than fishing stations and salt-pans belonging to the wealthier towns of the mainland. And the famous document, recounting the despatch of the three Paduan consuls<sup>1</sup> sent to govern the village of Rialto, though in all likelihood a forgery, yet represents the facts of the case—that the islands were under the charge of the rectors or consuls appointed by the neighbouring cities, Monselice, Padua, Oderzo, and Aquileia.

But in the stillness of the lagoons, in the freshness and freedom of the sea air, those germs of individuality and liberty which began to quicken as the pressure of imperial Rome was lightened, found a congenial soil and fitting nutriment. The islands, unorganized and disconnected as yet, gained two solid advantages from the sufferings of the mainland under foreign invasion: their population increased through the influx of refugees, and the decay of the mainland cities prompted them to claim their freedom. In 466 the twelve islands drew together in federation; each governed by its own tribune, elected by itself, but all meeting in parliament for the consideration of

Bibiones (between Grado and Caorle), Caprulas or Caorle, Heraclea, Equilio or Jesolo, Torcello, Morianas or Murano, Rivoaltus or Rialto, Metamaucus or Malamocco, Pupilia or Poveglia, Minor Clugies or Sottomarina, Clugies Major or Chioggia. He adds: "Est etiam in extremitate Venecie castrum, quod caput argilis [*i.e.* Cavarzere] dicitur sunt etenim apud eandem provinciam quam plurime insule habitabiles." For a list of these, see Monticolo's edition, p. 66.

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia* (Venezia: 1858), ignores the story. For the Paduan document see Daru, *Histoire de la Rép. de Venise*, and Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders* (Oxford: 1880), vol. ii.; Andreae Danduli, *Chronicon*, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Scrip.* tom. xii. lib. v. cap. i. p. x.



points affecting the common weal.<sup>1</sup> This was the first organic movement of the lagoon villages; the bursting of the seed destined to ripen into so noble a fruit. About a century later the results of their consolidation became apparent when Narses arrived in Italy. The Paduans in vain appealed to the imperial general, begging him to restore to them their rights over the mouths of the Brenta and the Bacchiglione which fell into the lagoon. The islanders argued that the outlets of these streams belonged to the lagoon-dwellers in virtue of the labour, which kept them open. Narses refused to decide either way, and the mainlanders were too weak to enforce their will without his aid. The general, by this conduct, distinctly acknowledged the twelve islands as an element in the empire, and they gained a solid standing ground. The people, by the realization of a portion of their desire, became conscious of the whole of it. The sequence of Venetian history from this point, down to the establishment of Rialto as the capital, is governed by a series of actions and reactions rapidly initiated and as rapidly exhausted, by a process of attraction and repulsion, now towards Byzantium, now away from it. It is the people who move; throwing their weight now into this scale, now into that, as they saw that the dreaded danger of absorption threatened from Italy or from the East. Always with the passion for independence alight in them, they were not Roman or Frankish with their bishops, nor Byzantine with their doges, but Venetian, with a strong resolution to make themselves recognized as such. They stretched ever forward to the object of their desire, and rejected all that might prove inimical to their hopes of attaining it.

But this very desire for self-realization, while it wrought in the core of the state as a whole, quickened

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* lib. vii. cap. i. p. 1; Janotii, *Dialogus de Rep. Venet.* cum notis Crassi (Lugd. Bat. 1722), ap. Groev. *Thesaur. Antiquit. It.* p. 40.

a similar appetite in each individual member. If Venice craved to stand sole and independent in Italy, each tribune also desired to rule sole and alone in Venice. Jealousy between Malamocco and Heraclea, rivalry for the leadership inside Venice, summed itself up in feuds and quarrels between the tribunes of the principal towns, until the federation seemed in danger of falling to pieces through the intensity of its own passion. Only one solution offered itself—to waive individual claims and to create a personal head of the state, concentrating the functions of government in his hands. The Venetians elected their first doge, Luccio Paolo Anafesto, in the year 697.<sup>1</sup> Internal discord necessitated this change in the constitution; the antagonism of minute particles inside Venice had brought about the revolution. It followed, therefore, that the colour first given to the dukedom would depend upon the character of the city which chanced to be in the ascendant at the moment, of the sympathies of that tribunate which succeeded in imposing itself upon its federate brothers. Anafesto was a Heracleian, and his election proclaimed the leadership of Heraclea. That city had always been aristocratic in sympathy, with a strong leaning towards Byzantium. This quality in Heraclea was determined in part by opposition to its rival Malamocco, the very kernel of the democratic factor. And so the doges first emerged tinctured with aristocratic proclivities, leaning towards autocracy and ready to court Byzantium and the emperor.

Though the creation of a doge had been a voluntary act and clearly necessary for the salvation of the state, yet it concentrated and intensified the internal oppositions it was designed to allay. For the doges and Heraclea stood there now as the embodiment of the danger from Byzantium, and drew upon themselves all that popular jealousy which was only appeased by the ruin of the reigning city. The solu-

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *loc. cit.*



tion that Venice had chosen placed her in the same difficulty as that which the action of the popes imposed upon the whole independent movement in Italy. Like the popes, the doges might either lean too much upon one or other of the external forces which were threatening to absorb their state, or, by a skilful manipulation of internal discords, they might succeed in making themselves sovereign. The people desired their doge to be a bulwark against any encroachment by the Church upon civil liberty; prince of themselves, but not agent for Byzantium. The least swerving from the prescribed line, the slightest suspicion of an ambitious policy, the first note of a servile submission to any dominant power, sufficed to rouse the people, who deposed, blinded, tonsured, or even slew their dukes. In the same light the people regarded their bishops. They desired them to be the safeguards of their faith against heretical Byzantium; but they would not tolerate that their spiritual pastors should act as political agents for the Church or for the Church's allies. In fact, the people submitted to their doges and their bishops solely with a view to their one engrossing object, the evolution of their own independence. The attempt of either bishop or doge to impose his will upon the state was sufficient to insure his ruin.

Resuming the course of Venetian history, we find it obeying the impulses just noticed. In the year 728 the pope, for his own purpose of aggrandizement, had united with Liutprand against Leo the Isaurian. But the results of this policy, the capture of Ravenna by the Lombards, proved so alarming to Venice, that when the pope discovered his mistake and desired to undo his work, he had little difficulty in persuading Orso, the doge, to restore the exarch Paul to his capital.<sup>1</sup> For the moment Venice, obeying the impulse given by her doge, held with Byzantium. In reward the Venetian merchants obtained from Constantinople

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* lib. vii. cap. iii. pp. 2, 3, 4.

large commercial privileges in the Pentapolis ; while Orso himself received the honorary title of "hypatos" or consul.<sup>1</sup> The sympathies of Venice set towards the East, in alarm at the danger from the Lombards. But, while the state was in process of formation, any movement implied a counter-movement. The stronger the action showed itself, the more rapid and positive the reaction was sure to be. To the people it seemed that they had gone far enough with their doge. He had achieved one object of his desire ; he might reckon himself a noble of the empire, within a measurable distance of the Augustan majesty. The people whom he governed, however, were intensely sensitive. These dignities bore too much the character of a pledge committing the duke and Venice to dependence on Byzantium. A doge of Venice should not wear that title as a lesser one, nor think it honourable to hold a subordinate office of the Eastern court. The knowledge of their own weakness forced the Venetians into violence. They murdered Orso, and abolished the dukedom in favour of a yearly magistracy, called the "mastership of the soldiery."<sup>2</sup> They revolted fiercely from Byzantium, whither their doge seemed to be leading them.<sup>3</sup>

The reaction had, of necessity, been excessive ; part of its effect required to be undone. Experience proved that the dukedom was essential to the coherence of the state. The mastership of the soldiery recalled the evils of the tribunate. Another current of feeling, opposed to the violence which had abolished the dukedom, set in, and Heraclea profited by it. She desired to resume the prestige she had lost through the suspension of the dukedom. In the year 742 a

<sup>1</sup> See Bury, *Hist. of the Later Roman Empire* (London : Macmillan, 1889), vol. ii. p. 172, p. 382, note 3. Ducange, *Gloss. Med. Græc.* renders it by *vir primarius*.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* p. 13 ; cap. iv. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig* (Gotha : 1905), vol. i. pp. 48, 49. Gfrörer, *Geschichte Venedigs* (Graz : 1872), is inclined to exaggerate Venetian dependence on Byzantium.

Heracleian victory over its democratic neighbour Jesolo brought back the doges, in the person of Deodato, a noble of the victorious city.<sup>1</sup> But the permanent result of the whole revolution made itself felt in the removal of the government from Heraclea to Malamocco, the democratic centre. This was a step towards the thorough compromise of Rialto. A Heraclidean, an aristocrat, a Byzantine in sympathy, still reigns, but reigns at Malamocco, democratic and anti-Byzantine. Both the factors of the future Rialto were modified towards the point where union became possible. The restoration of the dukedom, however, in spite of this modification, was the work of Heraclea—a proof of its ascendancy regained, and therefore a sign that the state had taken a swing towards Byzantium again.

And the course of Italian politics generally determined Venice, for a while, in her present direction. For the reciprocal attraction between the Church and the Franks had just begun. The two powers hostile to Constantinople, and standing together for the attainment of their respective objects, the mastery of Italy and a temporal sovereignty, were becoming allies. The results of this union were felt at once by Venice. The Venetians had saved the exarchate from the Lombards; Charles now desired to see these protectors of Byzantium expelled from the Pentapolis, in order to pave the way for his own occupation of that district. Accordingly, under the direction of Pope Hadrian, an organized attack upon the Venetian merchants took place, and the pope was able to write to his ally informing him that his will had been done, and that Venice no longer held a single garrison or factory in the Ravennate.<sup>2</sup>

This action of the pope awakened the greatest alarm in Venice; an alarm which resulted in the accentuation of Byzantine sympathies, and in strengthening

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. ix. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Codex Carolinus* (Romæ : 1761), Epist. 84, ad ann. 785.



the hands of the doges, to whom the state looked for protection from the imminent danger. How close the peril had come the Venetians learned when they discovered that the pope, not content with his attack upon them in the Pentapolis, had actually negotiated with Giovanni, patriarch of Grado, for the creation of a Papal and Frankish party inside Venice itself.<sup>1</sup> The materials ready to the patriarch's hand were, naturally, the democratic faction, who still eyed Heraclia and the Heracleian doges with bitter jealousy. A crisis could not be long delayed. The questions which now agitated the whole of Italy were faithfully reflected in the lagoons. Like a sensitive flame, Venice responded to the least movement on the mainland. She was not yet strong enough to declare her independence between two such powers as the Franks and the Eastern Empire; therefore, for the moment, her perception of her own aims, her intuition of the political problem, became confused. The question appeared to be submission to East or West; the parties of Frank and anti-Frank seemed to express her central difficulty. But in reality the desire for individual freedom remained in the background, as the vital and motive force inside the state. For how long a crisis could be delayed depended largely upon the character of the doge. Maurice Galbaio had guided Venice clear of embroglios on the mainland, though he could not fence her round from infection by the general turbulence of the political atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> His son Giovanni succeeded him—a man of very different temperament, violent and headstrong, and moreover placed in a position of greater difficulty, for the crisis was ripening to the acuter phase of its progress. The pact, the donation, the crowning of Charles, were all notorious now; hung out like a danger-signal for those communities

<sup>1</sup> *Codex Carolinus* (Romæ : 1761), Epist. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xii. p. 1; cap. xiii. p. 1; Filiasi, *Veneti Primi e Secondi* (Padova : 1822), tom. v. cap. xxi. p. 265.

who felt the impulse towards self-government, leaving no doubt as to the intentions of the emperor and the pope. Venice had to look to herself. By a violent deed of blood she wrote her refusal to be included in the donation. She repelled the assumption that she belonged to Charles and was his chattel to give away. She denied her allegiance to a pope who could presume to claim the imperial title, and then to sell it; to that head of the Church who dared to prove a traitor to the passions of his country.

In this fervour of opposition to the Church events centred round two ecclesiastics. The bishopric of Olivolo, in Venice, fell vacant, and, at the request of the Emperor Nicephorus, the doge appointed to that See a young Greek, named Christopher, a mere boy, sixteen years old at most.<sup>1</sup> Giovanni, patriarch of Grado, seized the opportunity to test the strength of himself and his party against the doge and the Byzantine element. He believed that he was powerful enough to show a mastery which would determine the waverers, and hasten the subjection of Venice to Charles and to the pope. Giovanni refused to consecrate Christopher. The doge remained firm in the support of his appointment. Giovanni replied by excommunicating not only the young Greek, but all his adherents, including the doge. The heat of party fury and his own violent nature determined Galbaio's action. He sent his son Maurice with a fleet to Grado. The patriarch was besieged in his palace, pressed closer and closer, and finally thrown from the highest tower. Giovanni had shown himself a traitor to the instincts of Venice, as his superior, the pope, had proved a traitor to the desires of Italy. Yet the vengeance which overtook the patriarch savoured too strongly of tyranny. It came as a culminating point to a long series of masterful deeds on the part of the Galbaj.

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Diacono, *Cron. Ven.* ed. Monticolo, *op. cit.* p. 100; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xiii. p. 23; Filiasi, *op. cit.* cap. xxii.

But Venice was no sooner relieved from a danger threatened by her bishop and the Church than she found herself face to face with the opposite danger from her doge relying on Byzantium, whose triumph seemed secured by the murder of Giovanni. True, Venice would not allow her patriarchs to act as agents and procurers for the Church and for the Franks, but neither did she desire her doges to become tyrants of the state. The murder of Giovanni was an act of excessive violence, and warned her of that ever-present menace. The sympathy of the people swerved from the Galbaj and claimed the elevation of Fortunatus, nephew of the murdered patriarch and a man of the same political complexion, to the See of Grado, as a check to the tyrannical tendency of the doge, and as an expiation for the sacrilege he had committed.<sup>1</sup>

A crisis such as that which was agitating Venice could not fail to produce men of strong personality. Of all who appear upon the scene at this moment, none is more remarkable than Fortunatus, the new patriarch of Grado. In page after page of that populous chronicle bequeathed to us by Andrew Dandolo, we meet him again and again—here borne high upon some wave of reaction, there sunk deep in that troublous sea of politics, but always present, active, restless, intriguing; now at Venice, leading his party, the party of Charles and of the Church; now in exile, flying from his country, hurriedly crossing “the white Alps alone.” In Germany, in France, in Istria, at Constantinople, we find him; anywhere but at Grado and his episcopal seat. He is courtier, merchant, virtuoso, engineer, and architect; anything but pastor of that quiet church among the still lagoons. Restlessness, movement, diplomacy, were passions with the man. It is almost impossible to follow him closely through his journeys or his intrigues; yet around him are grouped the chief actors and the principal events that contributed to the emergence of

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xv. p. 24; Giovanni Diacono, *loc. cit.*



Rialto. The intimate friend of Charles the Great, known only too well to the popes, dreaded by Nicephorus, and counsellor of Pipin, Fortunatus moves about among these great personages, the outward and visible sign of the spirit which was troubling them.

The appointment of Fortunatus to the See of Grado was made in obedience to a reaction against ducal tyranny. His politics were known to be decidedly in favour of the Church and the Franks. Pope Leo at once sent him the pallium and his blessing on the work he should do for the Holy See. That work was to carry on his uncle's course of action; to establish and strengthen the party that sympathized with Charles; to pave the way for the reduction of Venice as a province of the West. But Leo knew the shifty nature of the man, and thought it necessary to urge upon him the duty of strenuous action. "Remember," he writes to Fortunatus, "that the place you have now undertaken is not a place of rest, but of labour."<sup>1</sup> So it proved to the patriarch—a place of labour, indeed, from the beginning to the end. The pope, however need have felt no such fears. Fortunatus had not occupied his See more than three months when a conspiracy against the doges was discovered and stamped out.<sup>2</sup> The author of the conspiracy proved to be the patriarch, who, relying on the enthusiasm which had raised him to his dignity, concerted the measures of the plot with Obelerio, tribune of Malamocco and chief of the democratic party. But the treason took wind. Obelerio and his brother conspirators retired to Treviso, while Fortunatus experienced his first exodus. He fled across the Alps to Charles the Great, whose court he found at Selz.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ughelli, *Italia Sacra* (Venetiis: 1720), tom. v. pp. 1075 *et seq.*, for the history of the See of Grado.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xv. p. 26; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* pp. 100–1.

<sup>3</sup> Dandolo, *loc. cit.*; Giovanni Diacono, *loc. cit.*; *Monumenta German. Hist.* edit. Pertz (Hanov.: 1826), tom. i.; Einhard, *Annales*, p. 191, ad ann. 803; Gfrörer, *op. cit.*; Kretschmayr, *op. cit.* p. 54.

His reason for taking so long a journey and seeking such a distant asylum was his hope to move Charles to active measures which should render the donation of solid effect—to urge him to undertake the reduction of the lagoons. Fortunatus never showed himself less than wholehearted in his service of the Church and of the Franks as its ally. He brought to bear upon the emperor many cogent arguments.<sup>1</sup> Setting aside his own faithful adherence to the cause of Charles, the proof of which lay patent in his exile, Fortunatus dwelt upon the strong Byzantine sympathies of Venice. Here was a small province which the emperor claimed as his own and had given away to his friend the pope; yet that province, so far from acknowledging the Emperor's authority or bowing to his will, had expelled his partisans and professed allegiance to a court which scorned his imperial title and laughed at his pretensions to the lordship of Italy.<sup>2</sup> But more than that; Fortunatus insisted on the wisdom of subduing Venice, and so establishing a naval power upon the Adriatic; for it was through those waters that Constantinople must be attacked, should Charles ever find the leisure to prosecute a dream of his ambition, the union of East and West in his own person. The emperor listened to the patriarch, and the advice then given bore fruit seven years later in Pipin's attack upon Venice.

Fortunatus's success at the Frankish court was great. Charles not only felt the political value of the man who had made himself the leading spirit of the anti-Byzantine party at Venice, and indicated the importance of Venice as a stepping-stone to the East. He also grasped and appreciated the wide views of the exiled patriarch. The emperor was without a fleet, his sea power was virtually non-existent. That is the reason why he had made no effort to retain the seaboard provinces when coming to terms with Nice-

<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Carol.* tom. ii. p. 47; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Baronius, *Annales Eccles. cum crit. Pagii* (Luca: 1743), tom. xiii. p. 379.

phorus. He lacked the means to hold them. Now Fortunatus, with remarkable political and strategical insight, pointed out to him the value of the lagoons as a basis for sea power in the Adriatic, and in doing so foreshadowed the future destinies of the state he was endeavouring to bring under Frankish dominion. Moreover, Charles was conciliated by the presents Fortunatus had brought with him to Selz. The emperor's cathedral at Aachen was occupying much of his attention, and the patriarch's gifts came most timely. They consisted of hangings of tapestry and silk, church ornaments in gold and silver, and, above all, two ivory doors of exquisite workmanship.<sup>1</sup> We are curious to know how the patriarch carried all this heavy luggage with him, in his hurried flight over almost pathless mountains; but here the chronicle fails us, as on many another point. In return for his treasures Fortunatus received an imperial diploma,<sup>2</sup> granting him the full enjoyment of all his ecclesiastical emoluments in Istria and the Romagna, together with freedom to trade untaxed in any port of the new empire. His exile, however, prevented him from actually realizing the revenues of his Church, and to meet his present wants Charles made him abbot of Moyon Moutier,<sup>3</sup> near Bordeaux. The patriarch's treatment of his abbey was characteristic of the man. He could not endure to live away from the court and active politics near the person of Charles. Nevertheless, he demanded that the whole income of Moyon Moutier should be paid to him for his private use; intending to let the brothers fare as best they might, while he remained an absentee. The corporation protested. After litigation, appeals, and arbitration, in all of which the restless spirit of Fortunatus took a keen delight, the matter was arranged by compromise. The

<sup>1</sup> *Monum. Germ. Hist.*; Einhard, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Baronius, *op. cit.* tom. xiii. p. 389; Ughello, *op. et loc. cit.*; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Mabillon, *Annales Benedictini* (Luca: 1749), tom. ii. p. 316.



new abbot received half the revenues of the monastery, and remained at Charles's court, where we must leave him for the present.

When Fortunatus concerted his measures for the overthrow of the Galbajj, he counted on that reaction against the doges which he perceived had set in after the murder of the patriarch Giovanni. His own impetuosity of spirit, however, misled him; he acted too precipitately, and failed. But his failure did not stay the course of popular feeling in Venice, nor prove that it was weak and transitory. Obelerio, the partner in the plot, who had sought refuge at Treviso, reaped the benefit of waiting. From his hiding-place he continued his antagonism to the doges. When it was clear that hatred of the Galbajj had reached its highest point, his party in Treviso elected him doge, and he made a sudden entry into Malamocco,<sup>1</sup> his native town; the people welcomed him with enthusiasm and proclaimed him Dux. The Galbajj were forced to fly from Venice, whither they never returned. As a result of Doge Giovanni's high-handed action in murdering Fortunatus's uncle, and in consequence of the apparent tyranny of his conduct, the state, forgetful for the moment of the ever-present danger from the Church and from the Franks, swept violently away from Heraclea and Byzantium into the arms of Malamocco and of Charles. Malamocco, in the person of her tribune, Obelerio, assumed the leadership, and a further step towards the union and fusion at Rialto was effected. For Obelerio reigned as the first Malamoccan, or democratic, doge. Heraclea no longer absorbed the governing functions; they were becoming common to all inhabitants of Venice. But stability was not yet secured; nor could it be until both Heraclea and Malamocco, with all the internal jealousy and discord which they represented, had been still further subdued and toned away.

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xv. p. 26; Giovanni Diacono, *loc. cit.*



The political sympathies of the new doge were well known. There could be no doubt as to the direction in which he would endeavour to lead Venice, if allowed to work his will freely and unrestrained. His devotion to the cause of Charles and of the Church admitted no question. But, by the law which was governing the development of Venice, this very outburst of popular feeling, that had raised Obelerio to the dukedom and given the leadership to Malamocco, implied a reaction. An undercurrent of opposition to the doge set in, slowly and barely perceptible at first, but gaining power as it went on. The impulse, however, that had carried Obelerio to the head of the state was not exhausted by its first effort. It still possessed force enough to enable the doge to accomplish a deed personally grateful to himself, and infinitely important in paving the way for the appearance of Rialto as the capital—the destruction of Heraclea. The Heracleans themselves supplied the pretext for their own annihilation. When Fortunatus fled to Charles, the nobles of that city seized on some of the patriarchal lands which lay along the coast. The people of Jesolo, envious of this extension on the part of their neighbours, and under cover of a pious wish to restore to the Church its due, attacked Heraclea, and were themselves nearly destroyed. In these straits Jesolo appealed to the democratic centre, to Obelerio and Malamocco. The doge convened an assembly which solemnly decreed the destruction of Heraclea. The people of Jesolo and Malamocco razed the aristocratic city to the ground, and forcibly distributed its inhabitants among the other townships of the lagoon.<sup>1</sup>

The overthrow of Heraclea marks the furthest point attained by the wave of popular feeling which

<sup>1</sup> *Cronaca Veneta detta "Altinate,"* ap. *Archivio Storico Italiano* (Firenz: 1845), tom. viii. lib. iii., with a commentary by Professor Rossi. The author lived about A.D. 1210. Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 10.

had placed Obelerio and the Frankish party in power. Hitherto Obelerio had carried the people with him. But this deed seemed to derange the balance in the state. The tide of sympathy began to recede from the doge, and he was left to continue his course towards Charles and the Franks, alone. Each step that he took showed the distance between himself and his people to be growing steadily greater; proved more and more clearly that ruin lay in his path. For him there was no alternative and no hope. He may have heard the waters lapsing behind him, and foreseen that he must be stranded and deserted before his policy could bear its fruit; yet to fall back with the tide was impossible. He could not stay its inevitable sweep towards Byzantium again. He might not put off the pre-eminence he had won, and, by sinking into obscurity, escape the vengeance of the opposite faction. Nothing remained for him but to press on towards an unattainable goal, to face the impossible task of carrying his country with him into the arms of Charles.

When Fortunatus heard of Obelerio's success, and of his elevation to the dukedom, he left the court of the emperor and hurried down to Venice. But the hopes of sharing in the victory of his friends and returning to his See at Grado were not realized. After the discovery of Fortunatus's plot, the Galbaj had created a new patriarch, and Obelerio deemed it prudent to leave that appointment undisturbed. Fortunatus was so restless an intriguer, that the doge rightly declined to place him in his See again. Obelerio felt that the patriarch would only be a source of danger to his newly established authority, and that his presence would needlessly exasperate the defeated party of Byzantium. So Fortunatus received no encouragement and no invitation to Malamocco. He wandered like an unquiet spirit round the borders of the lagoon; now at Campalto near Mestre, now at Torcello; always revolving some scheme for his

return. Fortune favoured him so far, that one day John the Deacon, Bishop of Olivolo, fell into his hands, and was carried prisoner to Mestre.<sup>1</sup> But, while he was considering the best method of turning this advantage to account, John slipped through his fingers and escaped to Malamocco. Fortunatus saw that his game was ruined for the present. He abandoned all hope of recovering Grado, and betook himself to Istria, to make what profit he could out of the privilege that had been granted him by Charles. There he established himself as a merchant, owning four large vessels and accumulating a vast fortune from the cargoes which they carried. Some of this wealth he invested politically in buying interest at the Frankish court, and in securing connections among the chiefs of the Dalmatian seaports which still belonged to the Eastern Empire.<sup>2</sup> Some, again, he stored up in works of art, in silks, in hangings, in silver and gold ornaments. He filled the high office of imperial judge,<sup>3</sup> and kept a little court of dependents about him. He formed a company of military engineers, for whom he acted as *impresario*, and hired them out to the best bidder. In his capacity of political agent for the Frankish emperor he endeavoured to sap the allegiance of the Dalmatian towns and to seduce them to acknowledge a dependence on the Emperor of the West. Ceaselessly active, plotting, governing, amassing money; all the while intent upon his return to Venice and to Grado, where his heart really lay.

The bishopric of Pola fell vacant, and, at the request of Charles, Leo most reluctantly conferred it upon Fortunatus, stipulating that should he ever recover his patriarchal See, he should relinquish

<sup>1</sup> Ughelli, *loc. cit.*; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 102; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> By the treaty of 802, between Charles and Nicephorus. See Filiasi, *op. cit.* cap. xxii.

<sup>3</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 8.



that of Pola, with all its emoluments. The pope dreaded Fortunatus's rapacity. In a letter to Charles he begged the emperor to be moderate in his favours to the patriarch. "I pray you," he says, "while you are labouring for the temporal well-being of this man, think of his immortal soul; that through the fear of you he may the better fulfil his ministry. For we have heard no good report of him, such as becomes an archbishop, neither from these parts, nor yet from France, where you have lent him such powerful support. But, thank God, all is not unknown to you. Ask men whom you can trust; for those who praise him to you do so for a purpose and bought thereto."<sup>1</sup> Charles, however, still remained the patriarch's firm friend, and Fortunatus still retained sufficient weight to influence Venice and the Adriatic. He may possibly have been the cause of that explosion which ruined Heraclea. In any case, he heard of it in Istria and rejoiced over the triumph of his friends. Its importance to him proved great. For Obelerio now believed himself strong enough to invite the patriarch to return to Grado. He hoped that the reappearance of Fortunatus in his See would add life and vigour to that party, whose victory he deemed secure upon the wreck of Heraclea.

But reaction was active in the air of Venice, and the presence of Fortunatus only served to stimulate it. Obelerio had steadily pursued his Frankish policy, and as steadily the temper of the people set against Charles and towards Byzantium once more. The conduct of their doge offered a continual subject for alarm; and the growing power of the Franks, the consolidation of Pipin's kingdom in Italy, all tended to heighten that sentiment. Obelerio married a Frankish wife; and, still further to parade his union with the conquerors, in the year 806 he left his capital to attend the court of Charles. While there he received, with all the submission of a subject,

<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Carol.* tom. ii. p. 47.



instructions as to the government and policy of Venice.<sup>1</sup> The Venetians could not accept in quiet the position of dependence which Obelerio designed for them. It seemed to them that their doge proposed to make Venice a fief of the Western Empire. The people felt that their ruler had proved once more unfaithful to the permanent aspirations of his race. The pressure upon them was becoming severe. Their doge and their patriarch acted no longer as checks and counterpoises to each other; on the contrary, they were at one, and both were working towards a consummation to which the whole instincts of the people were opposed. The ferment of popular feeling manifested itself in a revolution against Obelerio and his party.<sup>2</sup> The Doge, however, was still strong enough to retain his hold upon the reins of government. The presentiment of the final crisis, which was clearly now approaching, accentuated all political passions, and while it raised a violent opposition to the doge, it forbade any one to stand aside, and confirmed all those who had originally held with Obelerio. The revolution failed in its object.

Hitherto the Empire of the East had hardly been an active agent in the development of Venice. Byzantium had not interfered directly with the politics of the lagoons. But the idea of the great Roman Empire was ever present to the imagination of the people—a rock to which they could cling for support in any reaction against aggression from the West. Now, however, East and West were about to clash over Venice. Byzantium began to be an active factor

<sup>1</sup> *Mon. Germ. Hist.* tom. i. p. 193; Einhard, ad ann. 806; Cod. DLI. alla Marciana ap. Romanin. *op. cit.* cap. iv. *Chronicon Reginonis*, ap. *Mon. Germ. Hist. loc. cit.* p. 558. The Marcian manuscript says, "De Obelerio alii scripserunt quo tum Gallicam quidem nobilem haberet uxorem, promissionibus allectis ad regem perexit offerens dominium sibi contradere."

<sup>2</sup> *Chronicon Reginonis, loc. cit.*

in the movement of Venetian politics. The causes which immediately led to the awakening of the East were due to Fortunatus's conduct while an exile in Istria. His intrigues among the Dalmatian towns had resulted in the creation of a party favourably inclined towards Charles. The loyalty of the Dalmatian sea-ports was seriously shaken. Their attitude alarmed Nicephorus, the Emperor of the East; for at this moment the whole Italian policy of the Franks pointed to their desire to establish a fleet in the Adriatic. Nicephorus was a man of vigorous character, an able financier, and a brave, though unsuccessful, soldier. He had deposed Irene, and ascended the throne as the professed defender of the imperial majesty against the new-fangled Empire of the West. It was therefore impossible for Nicephorus to neglect the ominous signs along the Dalmatian coast. He despatched the patrician Nicetas to the Adriatic with the imperial fleet, and Venice, as a vassal of the East, received a summons to furnish a contingent.<sup>1</sup> Obelerio would gladly have refused; but the Franks, his allies, were not prepared to support him at the moment, and the temper of the people he governed had been steadily setting towards Byzantium ever since the fall of Heraclea. The Venetian squadron joined the fleet under the command of Nicetas, and, after awing the Dalmatian towns, the patrician sailed to Venice. The policy of Obelerio and of Fortunatus, their intentions and actions as regards Venice and Dalmatia, were well known to the Eastern court. Nicetas had been instructed to destroy their authority and to exact guarantees for the loyalty of the lagoons. The patriarch did not wait his coming, but fled again to Charles. An assembly convened by Nicetas declared his See vacant and himself an outlaw. The patrician sailed to Constantinople, taking with him Beato,

<sup>1</sup> *Mon. Germ. Hist.*; Einhard, *loc. cit.*; Finlay, *op. cit.*; Filiassi, *op. cit.* cap. xxiii.; Romanin, *op. cit.* cap. ix.; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 16.

Obelerio's brother, as hostage for the doge's future conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The crisis for Venice was evidently approaching. Both East and West were beginning to put the question whose she meant to be; nor would they wait long for an answer. It would soon become impossible for Venice any further to conceal her hand, to continue that outward play between the policy of loyalty to the East and obedience to the West, while inwardly pursuing the problem of her own individual preservation. Inside Venice the respective power of the Frank and Byzantine factions had not yet been fairly tested. In the scene which had just been enacted under the guidance of Nicetas, the presence of the imperial fleet and the absence of the Franks had terrified the followers of Obelerio into silence. But the doge declined to accept the action of Venice as a proof that his policy had lost the support of the people. He believed that the balance yet hung undetermined.

The question of their allegiance was again put to the Venetians the following year, and this time in more categorical form, requiring a more decisive answer. The result proved Obelerio's supposition to be correct; the balance had not yet finally dipped towards Byzantium and against Charles. The doge, living in the heat of the struggle, could not see that the conduct of Venice was in reality predetermined by the weakness of the East and the greater proximity of the Franks. He was not aware that the people, always bent on independence, would certainly declare their allegiance to that power which was least able to enforce it. Nicephorus again sent the imperial fleet into the Adriatic<sup>2</sup>; this time for the purpose of recovering Comacchio and the exarchate, in retaliation for Fortunatus's attempt to seduce the Dalmatian

<sup>1</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 194; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 103; Dandolo, *loc. cit.* p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 196; Romanin, *loc. cit.*



towns. Venice again received orders to furnish a contingent to the admiral Paul. To obey meant war on Pipin; to refuse meant defiance to Nicephorus. The critical moment for the future of Venice was at hand; while for the present either course was dangerous, perhaps fatal. A decided step either way would at least have secured to the Venetians an ally, Frank or Byzantine. But the balance of parties prevented the state from taking any positive line of action. Out of three possible issues, Venice pursued the most perilous, and by her conduct she severed herself both from East and West. The result, however, proved fortunate, for it threw the state upon its own resources, and compelled Venice eventually to save herself by her own unaided energy. The party opposed to Obelerio forced the doge to supply the contingent to Paul's fleet. The expedition sailed to Comacchio and was defeated. This check roused the spirits of the Frankish faction; and when Paul returned with the remnants of his squadron to Venice, he encountered determined opposition. Obstacles were thrown in the way of his signing a treaty with Pipin, and his life was in such danger that he found himself obliged to fly.<sup>1</sup> This, then, was the result of the momentary balance between parties in Venice, apparently disastrous, but really propitious for the aspirations of the people. Pipin was now their enemy, for they had fought against him at Comacchio; Nicephorus had been alienated by the insults offered to his admiral Paul. Venice was face to face with the decisive moment.

Pipin did not long delay his action.<sup>2</sup> The advice given by Fortunatus seven years before, when he was at the court of Charles, had fallen on no unfruitful soil. The son of Charles was young, vigorous, courageous, eager to increase and consolidate his kingdom of Italy. The reduction of the lagoons offered an enterprise at once productive and glorious.

<sup>1</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 196; Filiati, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 23.



The affair of Comacchio determined him to subdue those islanders who so stubbornly refused to acknowledge his sovereignty. But first his policy required the reduction of Dalmatia. He sent to ask Venice to join him in the undertaking.<sup>1</sup> For Venice there could be now no rest, no quiet, no standing aside. The forces which were determining her formation required this repeated and intensified pressure; she had reached the moment of fusion and fiery heat which precedes crystallization. Obelerio exerted every power at his disposal to induce his compatriots to accept the offered alliance with the king. He urged that the state could look for nothing from Nicephorus; that here was presented an opportunity to repair the error of the previous year, an occasion to obliterate animosity and secure safety by union with the Franks. But the instincts of the people told them that salvation lay only in their own exertion, not in reliance on the power of any prince. The wave of reaction set in motion by the overthrow of Heraclea had gathered volume enough to claim its way. The Venetians declined to follow Obelerio; he found himself stranded and alone, the ruler of a people who refused to obey.

Venice rejected Pipin's invitation, and prepared to defend herself, trusting to no other aid than the courage of her men and the intricacy of her lagoon channels. The king made ready for an immediate attack. His fleet lay at Ravenna, and in Friuli an army was at his disposal. From north and south he could concentrate his forces upon Venice. Victory seemed easy to him. But he left out of his calculation the natural defences of those sea-born townships; he did not know the shoals and deeps of their sea home. By the advice of Angelo Particiaco, a Heracleian noble, who assumed the lead as Obelerio's influence waned, the people removed their wives, their children, and their goods from Malamocco to a little island in

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *loc. cit.*

the mid lagoon, Rialto, inaccessible by land or sea. The fighting men took up their post at Albiola, now Porto Secco, a village between Pelestrina and the port of Malamocco. There they awaited the attack of the Franks. Pipin seized on Brondolo, Chioggia, and Pelestrina. He endeavoured to press his squadrons on towards the capital, but the shoals opposed him. His vessels ran aground; his pilots missed the channels; the Venetians from the further shore plied him with darts and stones. He could not force a passage to Malamocco, and even then Rialto was not reached; it lay in view, but far away across six miles of winding canals and undiscovered banks. For six months, through the winter of 809-810, Pipin and his Frankish chivalry wasted their energy in the struggle to advance. At length the summer heats drew on, and rumours of the approach of an Eastern fleet warned Pipin of his failure.<sup>1</sup> He ventured on one last appeal. "Own yourselves my subjects," he cried to the Venetians, "for are you not within the borders of my kingdom?" "No! we are resolved to be the subjects of the Roman emperor, and not of you."<sup>2</sup> The king was forced to retire. He signed a treaty with the townships of the lagoons, whereby they consented to pay the nominal tribute formerly due to the Lombard kings, whose heir Pipin claimed to be. The debt was never discharged. Pipin left Venice filled with the bitterest mortification, and died the same year at Milan.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Our most trustworthy authorities for this episode of Pipin's attack are Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 104, and Constantine Porphyrog. *De Adminis. Imp.* cap. xxviii. They are both of the following century. Einhard, a contemporary, is suspect through his Frankish sympathies and the manner in which he hurries over the event. The later Venetian historians, including Dandolo, are anxious to magnify the victory, and fill their accounts with legends and myths.

<sup>2</sup> "ὑπὸ τὴν ἐμὴν χεῖρα καὶ πρόνοιαν γίνεσθε ἐπειδὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐμῆς χώρας καὶ ἐξουσίας ἐστέ." "ἡμεῖς δούλοι θέλομεν εἶναι τοῦ βασιλεως τῶν Ῥωμαίων καὶ οὐχὶ σοῦ" (Constantine, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>3</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 197.

Venice emerged from the crisis an independent state. She had attained the object of her long desire. Byzantium owed her a deep debt for having checked the progress of the Frankish arms eastward. The empire of the West would trouble her no more. The struggle and the victory completed her spiritual self-consciousness and the union of her various parts. Venice was homogeneous now, a whole, undivided, liberated from internal discord, and at peace. And not only was there fusion between her rival elements, but her people also became one with the place of their habitation. Venetian men and Venetian lagoons had made and saved the state. The spirit of the waters, free, vigorous, and pungent, had passed in that stern moment of trial into the being of the men who dwelt upon them; now the men were about to impose something of their spirit too, and build that incomparatively lovely city of the sea. Venice, in this union of the people and the place, declared the nature of her personality; a personality so infinitely various, so rich, so pliant, and so free, that to this day she wakens, and in a measure satisfies, a passion such as we feel for some life deeply beloved.

The island of Rialto had proved the advantage of its situation, and established a claim for gratitude as the asylum of Venice in her hour of need. The raids of Attila demonstrated the insecurity of the mainland; the attack of Pipin showed that the sea-coast was not more safe. Experience led to the final choice of this middle point. In the year 813 the seat of the government was removed to Rialto, under Angelo Particiaco as doge.<sup>1</sup> Rialto became the capital of Venice—a city of compromise between the perils of terra-firma and the banishment of the extreme *lidi*. Malamocco had destroyed Heraclea; she now renounced her supremacy in favour of Rialto, founded by a noble of the city she had ruined. Rialto became

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 1; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 106.



as it were a sacrament of reconciliation between Heraclea and Malamocco. Venice, battling blindly inside herself to win her freedom, found herself and achieved a unity with qualities which belong to her alone. It was the singular glory of Venice that, of all Italy, she alone remained unscathed alike by the foreign ravages of the fifth century and the conquest of the eighth. The seed sown during the incursions of Attila bore fruit, and came to the birth when the Franks overthrew the Lombard kingdom. Venice was the virgin child of Italy's ruin; conceived in the midst of anguish and distress, born to the very manner of invasion, and from invasion she alone escaped, pure and undefiled. The achievement of Venice, the repulse of the Franks and the creation of herself, requires the embellishment of no fables to render it more glorious; yet we cannot wonder that the Venetians have loved to gather round this central victory a whole mythology of persons and events. The cannon-balls of bread, fired into the Frankish camp in mockery of Pipin's hopes to starve Rialto to surrender; the old woman, king of council (*rex consilii*), who lured the invader to that fatal effort, the bridge across the lagoon, where half his forces were lost; the Canal Orfano, that ran with foreign blood and won its name from countless Frankish homes that day made desolate; above all, the sword of Charles, flung far into the sea when the great emperor acknowledged his repulse and cried, "As this, my brand, sinks out of sight, nor ever shall rise again, so let all thought to conquer Venice sink from out men's hearts, or they will feel, as I have felt, the heavy displeasure of God;"<sup>1</sup>—all these are myths, born of a pardonable pride; but Venice still remains her own most splendid monument.

The limit of this essay has been reached. Its

<sup>1</sup> See Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi*, ap. *Murat. Rer. It. Script.* tom. xxii.; *Cronaca Veneta da Canale*, ap. *Archiv. St. It.* tom. viii. par. 7; *Cron. Altinate*, bk. viii. p. 219; Dandolo, *op. cit.* cap. xvi. p. 23.



course has shown the impulse of federal Venetia effecting itself in the creation of Rialto. Yet it is hardly possible to come to a full-stop without a word about two principal actors in the drama, Fortunatus and Obelerio. Venice had attained to rest; for these two restless souls there was no longer any place in her. Their mission was fulfilled, their epoch passed them by, and they had not been blessed in dying with it. They were not born, but they had the equal misery to survive, out of due season. The doge faded out of Venetian politics from the moment when he failed to carry the people with him to an alliance with Pipin. The victory of the Venetians and the creation of the new capital were achieved under the auspices of a Byzantine reaction and the guidance of a Heracleian noble. A nuncio from the court of Constantinople formally deposed Obelerio, and banished him.<sup>1</sup> From his place of exile he yearned ever towards his native waters, and nursed delusive hopes of restoration. But his influence died when he was deposed. He made one fruitless descent on Malamocco, hoping to waken the city by the outworn cry of democracy and hatred of Heraclea, still vital in the person of the Doge Particiaco. He failed miserably. Party feuds and watchwords were old and meaningless for the Venetians now, merged in the new fact of Rialto. Particiaco dispersed the handful of revolutionists, and Obelerio forfeited his head. With him the last sparks of Malamoccan supremacy were quenched for ever.

Fortunatus, who had fled before the presence of Nicetas and the imperial fleet, returned to Grado for a brief space under the wing of Pipin and the Franks. But the king's repulse warned the patriarch not to try the temper of the victorious Byzantine party. For the third time he quitted his little island for the Frankish court. When Angelo Particiaco had established the

<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* lib. vii. cap. xvi. p. 24 ; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 105.

government securely in Rialto, Fortunatus applied for a safe conduct and permission to return. The doge believed that now, at least, there could be no more danger from the patriarch's Frankizing policy, and permission was granted.

Fortunatus came back to Grado, and, at first, devoted himself with his wonted vigour to the adornment of his church and to the cultivation of the episcopal lands. We hear of him at Grado, a small *lido*-island, like Torcello as we know it now, with a large brick church, and solid, square campanile shining rather redly across the waters. A few straggling, low brick houses, a winding canal, and banks trailing with creepers in spring, over the tops of which rise the dusky red-tipped leaves of the young pomegranate trees, or blazing in autumn with the endlessly varied crimsons of the dying tamarisk and sea-lavender. Behind Grado the hills rise in the distance—sharp dolomite peaks that catch the sunset lights and flame rosily across the grey lagoon. Between the shore and the hills the country is first heavy marshland, then comes a tract all broken and rough with limestone rocks cropping out everywhere, so rugged and untilled that there is just sufficient herbage to pasture some flocks of thin and meagre sheep. The land is scarred with white boulders, the rubbish of stony desolation swept down from the mountains every spring by the Tagliamento and the Isonzo.

Here, then, Fortunatus busied himself with the masons whom he called from France<sup>1</sup>; pouring out the treasures he had amassed in Istria, importing precious marbles for his church's façade, for the colonnades and porticos; filling his cathedral with altars of gold, altars of silver, pictures, purple hangings, tapestries, carpets, *panni d'oro*, jewels, crowns,

<sup>1</sup> "Feci venire magistros di Francia" (Fortunatus's will, ap. Hazlitt, *op. cit.* Doc. II., and Marin, *Storia Civile e Politica del Commercio d. Venez* (Venezia: 1798), tom. i. cap. vii.).

"the like of which are not to be found in all Italy," chandeliers of rare workmanship with branching lights. And the bishop in the midst of all this growing magnificence, superintending the builders, laying the beams, designing the patterns for the inlaid stones. The care of his church was not enough to occupy him. Agriculture, too, claimed a share of his inordinate activity, and at San Pelegrino he established a stud farm for the breeding of horses.<sup>1</sup> It would have been well for him if he had rested there. But he could not keep his mind from political intrigue; a demon of restlessness pursued him to the end. He thought that the Frankish party might still be revived in Venice; he, at least, never despaired of final success. The Venetians more than suspected his influence in the family feuds which tore the household of the doge in two, and drove his younger son, Giovanni, into exile.<sup>2</sup> The presence of Fortunatus was a never-failing source of disquiet to the whole of Venice. At length a plot against the life of Angelo Particiaco himself roused the extreme wrath of the people. The plot clearly had its origin among the broken fragments of the Frankish party, and as surely Fortunatus was its prime instigator. The Venetians deposed, and for the last time expelled the patriarch from his See.<sup>3</sup> His own passion for intrigue, his own inability to perceive that Venice had taken a new direction when Rialto rose to be the capital, that the old formulæ of Frank or Byzantine had little import now, were the causes of Fortunatus's ruin. He passed from the sphere of Venetian politics, where he had played so active and so perilous a part, into a region of obscurity whither we can hardly follow him. Henceforth he ceased to exercise any considerable influence on Venetian affairs. His name appears less and less

<sup>1</sup> See Filiati, *op. cit.* tom. vi. cap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *op. cit.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 17; Giovanni Diacono, *op. cit.* p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Dandolo, *loc. cit.* p. 35.



frequently in the chronicles ; yet we may be sure he was not quiet nor at rest. Whenever he does appear, it is always in connection with some plot or some intrigue, each scheme wilder and more hopeless than its predecessor, as the patriarch's authority dwindled, as his strength failed, as he sank surely down the decline of a life that had been so full and yet so fruitless.

On his expulsion from the lagoons, Fortunatus crossed to Dalmatia, where he had already secured connections, and applied himself to establishing these upon a firmer basis. His friend Charles had died in the year 813, and the patriarch could look for little help from the Frankish court, torn to pieces by the feuds of the great emperor's successors. He turned to seek for aid from Constantinople, from that court whose persistent enemy he had always shown himself. His personal policy wavered ominously ; the power had gone out of the man. He sought to gain the favour of Byzantium, under whose influence he hoped to be restored to Grado. With that object in view, he applied himself to harass the Emperor Lewis, as far as in him lay. He sent into the service of the rebel duke of Pannonia that band of military engineers which he had raised in Istria,<sup>1</sup> and thus materially assisted the duke in fortifying his country. For this conduct Lewis cited the patriarch to the Frankish court. Fortunatus feigned obedience and set out ; but on the way he turned aside and fled to Zara, whence he took ship for Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> There he remained three years, labouring, we may believe, to secure support ; but in vain, as the sequel proved. In the year 824 he left the capital in the train of an embassy sent to treat with the Emperor of the West. He trusted that his case would be mentioned among other points, and that so, at peace with East and West, he might

<sup>1</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 208, ap. ann. 821, "artifices et muriarios mittendo."

<sup>2</sup> Mabillon, *op. cit.* tom. ii. p. 458 ; Einhard, *loc. cit.*



return to Grado, for which he never ceased to long. But Lewis refused to pardon or to listen to him. The ambassadors declined to jeopardize the success of their mission by any unwelcome proviso in favour of Fortunatus; they repudiated and ignored him. Lewis ordered him to Rome, under a kind of arrest, there to answer before the pope for his share in the Pannonian revolt.<sup>1</sup> Fortunatus began his journey, but never accomplished it. He died upon the way, a broken and a failing man; a restless end to a restless life. His last thoughts were turned, with that indomitable hope of his, to the quiet church among the lagoons, whose bishop he had been for so many unquiet years. The closing words of his will, bequeathing his vast fortune to his See, have an almost pathetic ring when we remember all the failure of his career, the hope against hope deferred: "I will pay my debts before God," he writes; "and so it shall be when I am come back to my own Holy Church, in peace and tranquillity I will rejoice with you all the days of my life."

<sup>1</sup> Einhard, *op. cit.* p. 212, ad. ann. 824; Dandolo, *loc. cit.* p. 36.

## Bajamonte Tiepolo and the Closing of the Great Council

AMONG the many memorial stones of Venice, there is one likely enough to escape notice. It is a little square of white marble, let into the pavement of the Campo Sant' Agostino; and on it are these letters: "LOC. COL. BAI. TIE. MCCCX." Right in the heart of Venice, between the Frari and Campo San Polo, the feet of strangers rarely bring them by it. Yet the events commemorated by this stone are among the most important in the constitutional growth of the city. The slab marks the place of the *colonna d'infamia* which used to stand on the site of Bajamonte Tiepolo's house to perpetuate the recollection of his conspiracy and failure by this inscription:

Di Bajamonte fo questo tereno  
E mò per suo iniquo tradimento  
Se posto in chomun per altrui spavento  
E per mostrar a tutti sempre seno.

Time has come to cover this among other sore places. The column is gone; after many wanderings<sup>1</sup> it rests now in the courtyard of the Museo Civico; the little marble slab is found only by eyes that look

<sup>1</sup> Tiepolo's house stood at a spot now known as the Campiello del Remer. The column which marked the site was removed first to the angle of the Church of Sant' Agostino. In 1785 it was taken to the Villa Quirini at Altichiero, near Padua, and in 1829 it was sold to an antiquary, Sanquirico, who sold it again to the Duca Melzi. For many years it stood in the gardens of Villa Melzi on the Lake of Como. Not long ago the heirs of Melzi restored it to the Commune of Venice. See Tassini, *Curiosità Veneziane* (Venezia: 1863), ii. 165.

for it. But over Tiepolo's name has been piled a cairn of obloquy more hard to move. Chronicler after chronicler has flung his stone on the heap, and Tiepolo still remains "Bajamonte traditore."

Is this just? The chronicles are too frequently partial; they are too readily and too often the mouth-piece of success, which has won its privilege of open and uncontradicted speech. They trumpet the fame of victory; the character and motives of the defeated they leave—

black

To all the growing calumnies of time,  
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,  
But try the Cæsar or the Catiline  
By the true touchstone of desert—success.

We cannot accept the portraits which they draw without reserve. Tiepolo, as they present him to us, is a restless, ambitious, and turbulent noble, aiming at the overthrow of an excellent paternal government for the sole purpose of satisfying his individual appetite for sovereignty. We are asked to believe that his conspiracy was based on nothing but personal jealousy and ambition. It is hardly as such that we conceive him. He was, very likely, no single-minded hero; his motives may not have been unmixed; but the question he raised was a question worth raising—it touched the very core of Venetian home politics. Her past history justified Tiepolo's attempt; his failure determined the course she was to pursue. Tiepolo represented one of the essential elements in the original composition of the Venetian state. His conspiracy was the death-throe of an older order of government. We cannot look upon him as a merely factious rebel and traitor.

In the earliest years of its life the vital spark had been evoked in Venice by the friction between the nobility of Heraclea and the primitive fishing population of Malamocco. Under external pressure these two elements had come together at Rialto and founded

the city we now know as Venice. A rapid growth of wealth was the result of the peace secured by the fusion of discordant elements in Rialto. Venice profited by her period of rest to apply her energies to commerce and trade with the East. At the close of the Fourth Crusade (1204), when Venice came to the division of her share of the spoil, the dominion "quartæ partis et dimidiæ totius imperii Romanicæ," the islands of the archipelago were conceded, on a species of feudal tenure imitated from the Franks, to various leading families of the Republic. Andros went to the Dandolo; Gallipoli to the Viaro; Lampsacus to Quirini; Stalimene to the Navigaioso; Namfio to the Foscolo; Stampalia to the Ghisi—most probably at first, then to the Quirini; Icaria to Beazzano; Santorini to the Barozzi; Cerigo to the Venier; above all, Marco Sanudo received the title of Duke of the Archipelago, and with it no less than nine islands, including Naxos, Paros, Syra, and Melos, to name only a few of the enfiefments. It is to be observed that among the ten families above mentioned, six did not belong to the oldest Venetian nobility—the *Case Vecchie*, as they were called—who traced their pedigree back to the early days when Tribunitian government prevailed among the lagoon townships<sup>1</sup>; and, secondly, that the sites granted to these families were the most important for commercial purposes in the Levant, and virtually placed the trade route between Venice and Constantinople in the hands of Venetians, thus leading to a rapid increase of wealth at Venice. The colonization of Crete, again, in 1211, produced a similar result. The whole period immediately following the Fourth Crusade is marked by a rapid expansion of Venetian trade.

But this very increase of prosperity prepared the way for new internal difficulties. The old aristocratic factor, the Heracleian party, still retained many of its characteristics, claiming a superiority in virtue of its

<sup>1</sup> See Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 420.



descent<sup>1</sup>; while, on the other hand, from the people arose a class of men who, by commercial activity, had acquired a wealth far exceeding that of the old nobility. These men were drawn together by the common desire to assert themselves, to obtain the full value of their wealth, and the recognition of their position as a distinct element in the polity. It was inevitable that they should seek to develop themselves as a new aristocracy; no other course was open to them; but, as inevitably, such a development brought them into collision with the old hereditary nobility, already firmly rooted, and also with the people from whom they wished to differentiate themselves, but from whom they had really sprung. The achievement of their object could only tend to the creation of a plutocracy, absorbing in itself the rights of the people and the powers of the doge, round whom the elder aristocracy gathered. The apparition of this third party in the state gave presage of internal rupture which was destined to end in revolution; and the epoch was marked by the quarrels between the families of Dandolo and Tiepolo.<sup>2</sup>

Neither the people nor the old nobility were as powerful as this new party, and, accordingly, in the face of their common and aggressive foe they showed a tendency to draw to one another. It was doubtful, however, whether the bond which united them was of sufficient strength to bear the strain of inherently opposite impulses; indeed, in the end it proved not to be so. But for the present they were at one; and we shall see the people, in their last effort to assert their place in the constitution, calling for a Tiepolo rather than a Gradenigo as their doge.

The constitutional history of Venice, from 1084 to the date of Tiepolo's conspiracy in 1310, turns upon

<sup>1</sup> We have a proof of this in the pretensions of the *Case Vecchie*, or Tribunitian families, which continued almost to the close of the Republic.

<sup>2</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. ii. lib. vii. cap. i. p. 288, note 1.

the progressive movement of the new commercial aristocracy and the various steps by which it made itself paramount. This aristocracy had three primary objects in view, and its development was regulated accordingly. Its first desire was to crush the power of the doge, for he was the crown and centre of the old nobility, and frequently chosen from among them. The new party intended to use the ducal title and the ducal prestige as a mask behind which they could shelter, and through which they might, as through a mouthpiece, issue their crushing and repressive edicts. They succeeded. Before the close of the fourteenth century the dukedom was no longer the office of vital honour or of effective power that it had been. The ducal palace was too often merely a prison into which this cold and determined aristocracy could thrust any one of their own number who had the misfortune to incur their suspicion. The head of the state was deprived of almost all real weight, and left with empty dignities alone. The tragedies of Marino Falier and of Francesco Foscari illustrate the fate in store for any doge who should attempt to resuscitate the ducal authority.

The second object which directed the policy of the commercial aristocracy was the constitutional extinction of the people on the one hand, and, on the other, the reduction of the old nobility. So long as the people still retained their ancient right to share in the election of the doge, so long as the members of the more ancient families were still the successful candidates for the dukedom, the new party felt that it was not yet supreme, and nothing short of supremacy would satisfy it.

The third determining object of the party was its own consolidation. While it desired to repress everything external to itself, it was continually remodelling, rebuilding, reforming, internally strengthening its own body, so that when the final struggle came, it was able to offer an impregnable front to the attack of its foes.

The new aristocracy forced itself like a solid, irresistible wedge, like the ploughshare of an alpine glacier, into the living body of the Venetian constitution, and, in the end, froze the whole organism to that rigidity which, for a time, proved strength, but, in the end, was death. It tore its way between the doge and the people, severing, annihilating, and thrusting out the older aristocracy—the living matter which bound the two together. It retained the dukedom simply as a veneer upon its own solid surface, structurally unconnected with it; while the people were ground down to a smooth bed upon which it might rest. We do not, of course, intend to imply that the new party in the state was working self-consciously towards this end, that it deliberately, and in view of a pre-determined object, guided each individual step in its progress; but, deducing from results, we may conclude that such was the trend of the party's policy and such the spirit which animated its action.

The steps by which this third party, the new aristocracy, worked towards its goal, destroyed all other powers in the state, and emerged as sole lord of Venice, call for careful attention; they form the long prelude to the closing of the Great Council, and Tiepolo's conspiracy, the immediate outcome of that revolution.

For some time previous to the year 1172 the aristocracy had been engaged in curtailing the functions and privileges of the dukedom. Its judicial attributes had long disappeared; they had been transferred to the three Guidici del Palazzo, and even the appeal from this court, which formerly lay to the doge, had been vested in the supreme court of Venice, the Quarantia. But it was not till the election of the Doge Sebastian Ziani, in the year 1172, that the aristocracy obtained a solid and independent standing ground in the constitution. A gap of six months intervened between the assassination of Doge Michelle II. and the election of Ziani. In those six



months the nobles drew together into a legislative council, called henceforth by the name of the *Maggior Consiglio*<sup>1</sup>; the base of the pyramidal Venetian constitution, the largest cylinder, out of which all the lesser cylinders of the various executive and legislative colleges were drawn. The immediate object of this cohesion on the part of the aristocracy, old and new alike, was to secure to itself the sole voice in the election of the doge; to rob the people of their share in appointing the head of the state. In this the nobles were successful; the election of Ziani was unconstitutional, for it lacked the seal of popular acclaim.<sup>2</sup> But the robbery was veiled under the specious formula with which the new doge was presented to the people, "*Questo è il vostro doge si vi piacerà,*" and, *subauditur*, whether it please you or not.<sup>3</sup>

And now, from this solid basis of the *Maggior Consiglio*, the aristocracy could thrust itself forward and upward, until every office in the state was an emanation from itself alone. But this operation required time. Owing to the mode of election, the Great Council was not yet a close body; a seat in it was still open to all citizens of Venice. The new aristocracy were resolved to purge themselves of this popular element, not because they had any true aristocratic bias, but because, for the purposes of such a government as they contemplated, they felt that a body like theirs must be made a caste—must become

<sup>1</sup> It is improbable that this was the first appearance of such a council in Venice, but it is certain that its existence was reckoned as an undisputed fact from this date. The manner of electing was originally this: Twelve electors were appointed, two from each sestieri, or division of the city; each elector named forty citizens, noble or plebeian; these 480 formed the *Maggior Consiglio* (*Rom. op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 89; Giannotti, *Dialogus de Rep. Ven.* p. 40, and the notes of Crassus to the same; Ap. Græv. *Thesaur. Anti. Ital.*).

<sup>2</sup> Bernardo Guistiniano, *Dell' Origine di Venetia*, lib. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Marin, *Storia Civile e Politica del Com. dei Venez.* vol. iii. lib. iii. cap. vii.



oligarchical. But as yet their party was young, with many difficulties to overcome; notably the power of the doge, and the power of the old aristocracy; the one supporting the other as integral portions of the same political system.

Nevertheless, the immense stride which the commercial aristocracy had taken towards a real sovereignty in the state was soon shown by the establishment of the college of six *Consiglieri Ducali*,<sup>1</sup> in some respects a sort of privy council board. The creation of this office was a decided blow to the ducal independence. It robbed the doge of his power of initiative in the legislature; it curtailed his personal freedom of action; for now constitutional measures were proposed not by the doge alone, but by the doge in council, and in council with the aristocracy. Questions of foreign policy—especially as regarded commerce—the audiences granted to ambassadors, were entrusted no longer to the doge alone, but to the doge in council. The invention and development of this college placed two of the most important ducal functions in commission, and that commission was the appointment and the servant of the aristocracy.

But while restricting the real power of their doge, the aristocracy continued to augment the outward pomp attendant on him. This could be of no danger to themselves; it only added a splendour to the state and helped to flatter their own vanity. On the day of his election the doge was carried round the piazza,<sup>2</sup> like the Eastern emperors, scattering gold. He received an oath of allegiance from all the citizens every four years. He never now

<sup>1</sup> Originally this board had consisted of two councillors. This was now held to be too weak a check on the doge, and four more were added. See Roman. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *Chronicon*, lib. x. cap. i.; Marin. *op. cit.* vol. iii. lib. ii. cap. vii.; Sansovino, *Venezia, città Nobilissima e Singolare*, lib. xiii. *Vita di Seb. Ziani*. Muazzo, *St. d. governod. Rep. d. Venez.*; Roman. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 255, note 5.

left his palace without an escort of nobles and citizens. His person was declared sacrosanct. The ducal position was becoming defined—"Dux in foro, servus in consilio"; later on he was to be "captivus in palatio" as well.

This initial attack was soon followed by a further restriction of the constitutional powers and privileges pertaining to the dukedom. During the first thirty years of the thirteenth century the College of the Pregadi<sup>1</sup> (the invited), usually known as the Senate, was established as a permanent branch of the legislature. Formerly the doge, like the kings of England, had been free to ask any citizen to assist him with advice on matters of state. But now the Great Council issued two decrees: the first,<sup>2</sup> that for the future the members of the Pregadi should be elected by the Great Council itself, and out of that body, as the other members of the Government were; the second, that the number of the Pregadi be fixed at sixty. Here, then, was the Senate constituted beyond the power or the pleasure of the doge; constituted as a limb of the aristocracy. Undoubtedly this was a curtailment of the ducal freedom, a further tying of the doge's hands.\* For he was no longer able, by choosing his council himself, to determine what kind of advice he should receive, and to flavour it according to his own liking; but he was compelled to accept such advice as the Great Council chose to give him, and it was now seasoned to the palate of the aristocracy. By the election of his councillors from the *Maggior Consiglio*, the doge was rendered more than ever a servant of the new aristocratic party.

But while the new party had been pinioning their doge, they had also been advancing on their other wing, pressing forward the other side of their attack against the ancient nobility. On the abdication of

<sup>1</sup> Sandi. *I Principi di Storia Civ. d. Rep. d. Ven.* (Venezia: 1755), lib. iv. p. 507, cap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Sandi. *loc. cit.*

Pietro Ziani in the year 1229, two competitors for the ducal chair presented themselves—Jacopo Tiepolo, of the old conservative party,<sup>1</sup> and Marino Dandolo, a member of a family which had declared for the party of revolution. It was doubtless of great moment to the new aristocracy, now that it had succeeded in limiting the ducal power, to seat one of its own number on the ducal throne. With a man after their own heart established in the palace, there was no reason why they should not succeed in baffling the old aristocracy. The contest was therefore a keen one. At this period the number of ducal electors was forty, and so close was the voting that the forty were equally divided. The election was decided by lot, and fell in favour of Tiepolo. But this check to the new aristocracy only served to call forth a vigorous display of their real power. The *Maggior Consiglio* appointed the five *Correttori della Promissione ducale*,<sup>2</sup> or committee for supervising the oath of allegiance tendered by the doge on assuming office. The *Correttori* received authority to alter and amend the oath in any direction they might think fit, subject always to the sanction of the Great Council. At the same time, and with the same object, the new aristocracy appointed the three inquisitors,<sup>3</sup> whose duty it was to review the life and actions of a deceased doge, and to note where he had violated his oath. The inquisitors were armed with power over the heirs and property

<sup>1</sup> Tiepolo had been *podestà* at Constantinople and Duke of Candia (Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 212).

<sup>2</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 244. The earliest *promissione* extant is that of the Doge Enrico Dandolo, 1193. The *promissione* of Tiepolo is given as Doc. No. VI. in Mr. Hazlitt's *History of the Venetian Republic*, where it may be compared with that of Dandolo, which precedes it (Sandi. *op. cit.* lib. iv. cap. iii.). The *promissione* of the Doge Orio Mastropiero, dated 1181, is not, strictly speaking, a coronation oath—Mastropiero succeeded in 1178—but is of the nature of a criminal code. See Predelli and Besta, *Nuovo Arch. Ven.* new series, i. pp. 1-42.

<sup>3</sup> Sandi. *loc. cit.*



of the late doge, in order that the fear of them might weigh with him when alive.

There was, however, a second important result arising from the election of Tiepolo. It became obvious that if the electoral body could be divided always, as it had been on this occasion, some reform of the whole elective machinery was required. The new party, with their special objects steadily in view, determined to use the opportunity for their own purposes. Accordingly they elaborated that extraordinarily complex system of combined lot and ballot which resulted in the appointment of the forty-one electors to the dukedom.<sup>1</sup> They hoped that this system would prevent any powerful group in the *Maggior Consiglio* from being able ever to nominate a doge at their own pleasure. This reform was really a blow to the old aristocracy, who, up to this time, had undoubtedly the larger experience of affairs of state, and therefore the larger control in the selection of the doge. Besides this result, the new aristocracy possibly foresaw that when they had succeeded in obliterating or swamping the old nobility in the Great

<sup>1</sup> The first election by the forty-one was that of Marin Morosini in 1249. See *Rom. op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 249.

This was the process :

1. All who sat in the *Maggior Consiglio*, and were above thirty years of age, elected by ballot thirty members.
2. Thirty reduced themselves by lot to nine.
3. Nine elected by ballot, with at least six votes each, forty.
4. Forty reduced themselves by lot to twelve.
5. Twelve elected by ballot twenty-five.
6. Twenty-five reduced themselves by lot to nine.
7. Nine elected by ballot forty-five.
8. Forty-five reduced themselves by lot to eleven.
9. Eleven elected by ballot forty-one.
10. Forty-one elected doge with at least twenty-five votes.

(See *Rom. op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 289, 290, note 3 ; also the long account of the election of Lorenzo Tiepolo in the *Cronaca Veneta* of Martin de Canal, capp. 257-9 ; *Arch. St. It.* tom. viii. ; Sandi, *loc. cit.* Daru, *Histoire de la Rép. de Venise* (Paris : 1819), vol. i. p. 378, gives some popular doggerels on the mode of election.)



Council, such a purely fortuitous method of election as the one now created would greatly help to prevent their own party from falling to pieces through internal jealousies, when the day came that they, and they alone, should possess the field.

After the year 1250 the annihilation of the ducal authority was completed by a series of restrictions on the personal private action of the doge. He was no longer the real head of the state, above all offices, and from whom all other branches of the government fell away in descending and spreading lines. The position was just reversed; he was for the future to be simply the ornamental apex of the aristocracy, drawing all his existence from below him, from the base of the constitutional pyramid. A clause was added to the *promissione* by which the doge pledged himself to execute the orders of the Great Council, or of any other council, be they what they might.<sup>1</sup> Nor dared the doge exhibit his portrait, his bust, or his coat-of-arms<sup>2</sup> anywhere outside the walls of the ducal palace, that all might know that the essence of the dukedom was not resident in the doge, but in the whole aristocratic body. The doge was, in fact, to be the phenomenon of the aristocracy, with no individual existence, but living only as the outward and visible sign of the inward aristocratic spirit.<sup>3</sup> In this view he was held to be incompetent to announce his accession to the throne in any foreign court, except that of Rome. No one was to kneel to him, kiss hands, make presents, or render him any act of homage which could possibly be construed as homage to the indi-

<sup>1</sup> Sandi. *op. cit.* lib. iv. cap. iv. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> On the death of Renier Zeno in 1268, the quarrels between the two parties in the state, represented by the Dandolo and the Tiepolo respectively, grew so dangerous and began to spread so far, that a law was passed forbidding a citizen to display the arms of any great house as a note of his politics—the first warning of the constitutional struggle about to take place (Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 288, note 1).

<sup>3</sup> He was not allowed to trade either in person or by proxy (Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 292, note 1).

vidual rather than homage to the spirit of the aristocracy in which alone the doge lived and moved.<sup>1</sup> The elevation of a member of any family to the supreme office barred all other members of that family from holding posts under government either in Venice or in Venetian territory. The sons of the doge were ineligible as members of any councils except the Maggior Consiglio and the Pregadi,<sup>2</sup> and in this latter they had no vote. Finally, to complete the isolation of the ducal throne, to close the doors of the princely prison, it was decreed that no one who might be elected to the office of doge should have the right to refuse that appointment; that no doge could of his own choice resign his office, nor ever quit Venice.<sup>3</sup>

So far, then, we have followed the advancing steps of the new aristocracy. It had absorbed the ducal authority, and had delivered two well-planted blows—one at the old nobility, by introducing a mode of election to the dogado which destroyed the ancient influence of that body; the other at the people, by robbing them of their constitutional privilege of a voice in the election of the doge. But complete victory over these powers had not yet been won. The new party had yet to establish

<sup>1</sup> See the ancient formula for the annual reception of the people of Poveglia in honour of their valiant aid against Pipin. When they reached the doge's presence he said, "Sie' i ben vegnudi" (Welcome); to which they reply, "Dio vi dia el buon dì messer lo Dose, semo vegnui a disnar con vù" (God give you good morrow, Master Doge, we've come to dine with you); and they added, "Volemo la nostra regalia" (We want our regalia). "Volentiera, che cosa?" (Willingly, what is it?) replies the doge; and the people cry, "Vi volemo basar" (We want to kiss you). It is a scene of familiar friendliness, without a suggestion of the majesty that doth hedge a king, or the awe inspired by a court. Molmenti, *op. cit.* part ii. p. 468.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 250; Sandi. *loc. cit.* Neither the doge, nor his sons, nor his nephews might contract a foreign marriage without the consent of the Maggior Consiglio. See the *promissione* of Jacopo Contarini, 1275 (Rom. *loc. cit.* p. 305, note 2).

<sup>3</sup> Sandi. *loc. cit.*

and consolidate itself internally, and in the process the final collision was brought about—a collision which terminated in the Tiepolo-Querini conspiracy. As long as a seat in the Great Council was open to the people there still remained a large and indefinite popular element in the constitution; from this element the aristocracy determined to free themselves.

The tumultuous nature of democratic assemblies will usually lend a handle to those who desire to establish a tyranny. It was upon the necessity for curbing the jealousy, the ambition, the feud engendered by a yearly struggle for a seat in the Great Council, that the new party based their proposals of October 5, 1286. By these proposals it was intended to define the right to a seat in the council for all future time. Accordingly the three heads of the Quarantia moved,<sup>1</sup> first, that none should be eligible for a seat who could not prove that a paternal ancestor had already sat; secondly, that the doge, the majority of the Consiglieri Ducali, and the majority of the Great Council should have the power to elect to a seat in the council any who should be excluded by the preceding clause. The doge opposed the motion, and carried his opposition by eighty-two against forty. Although the motion was thus lost, yet it was a distinct declaration of programme, and to this programme the new aristocracy devoted itself for the next ten years. In this policy there were two intentions visible: one was to make the aristocracy a close body for the future, sharply defined, rigid, capable of very little further expansion; the other, to make membership in this close body an indispensable qualification to all offices of state. These objects were the logical conclusion following from the creation of the Great Council in the year 1172;

<sup>1</sup> See Tentori, *Il vero Carattere Polit. d. Baj. Tiep.* p. 74; Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 342, note 3; Sandi, *op. cit.* lib. v. cap. i. p. 1.



though the realization of them would undoubtedly be a violation of the constitution.

They were, however, to be realized; the constitution was to be violated, but by another doge. In the year 1289 Giovanni Dandolo died. He was buried in the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. As the crowd of senators, councillors, procurators, and magistrates issued from the great door of the church, after the funeral service was over, they found the piazza thronged by the people. They were there once more, and for the last time, to assert their right to be heard in the election of the doge.<sup>1</sup> Their cry was not for a Dandolo or a Gradenigo, but for Jacopo Tiepolo, a representative of the old nobility, and closely connected with those families who were violently opposed to the revolution which was silently going on in the state. No choice could have been less fortunate. Tiepolo was a man of good abilities; he had held many important posts under the government. But he was certainly timid; perhaps at heart averse to bloodshed and filled with horror at the prospect of civil war. He knew that his elevation to the dukedom would exasperate the new party to such a pitch as to render a violent explosion inevitable. He was not the man to lead the people and the old nobility at a crisis like the present; he suffered himself to be over-persuaded, and withdrew to his villa on the mainland. A great occasion for the anti-reform party was lost, and civil war became more probable than ever.

The popular cries from the piazza of Zanipolo rang in the ears of the new aristocracy, and warned them that they were as yet far from success. Much depended on the selection of a doge. It was necessary to find a man who should be at once devoted to their cause and yet of commanding powers. Their choice was happily directed; it fell upon a young man, comparatively young for so high an honour, Piero

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 323.



Gradenigo. He was thirty-eight years old at that time, and *podestà* of Capo d'Istria. In every way he was suited to the occasion. From his birth devoted to the new party, fully grasping their political intentions, rapid and intrepid in action, he at the same time possessed a coolness of judgment which made him pre-eminently fitted to guide his party through a crisis like the present. His unpopularity with the people, which won for him the name of "Pierazzo," was only a further recommendation in the eyes of the new aristocracy. He summed up in his person the essence of the party he was now called upon to lead.

Gradenigo arrived from Capo d'Istria, and was received in ominous silence by the populace. The new doge at once applied himself to the work that was expected of him. The propositions of 1286 clearly indicated the wishes of his party. Nothing remained for him but to reformulate them and propose them afresh in the council. In February, 1297, he moved the famous measure which has since been known as the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio*, the closing of the Great Council.<sup>1</sup> The terms of this act were:—

"1. That all who have sat in the Maggior Consiglio during the last four years shall present themselves for ballot before the Forty, and, on obtaining twelve votes, shall be members of the Maggior Consiglio for one year.

"2. That those who fail to present themselves now, owing to absence from Venice, shall do so on their return.

"3. That three electors be appointed, who, on the indication of the doge and his council, may nominate certain citizens from among those who are excluded by the first clause. That those nominated

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 343, 544, note 2; Tentori, *op. cit.* pp. 74, 75, 76, where the act is given in full; Sandi. *loc. cit.*; Gianotii, *op. cit.* p. 53.

shall go through the ballot before the Forty, and, on obtaining twelve votes, shall sit in the Maggior Consiglio.

"4. That the three electors shall be members of the Maggior Consiglio.

"5. That this statute may not be repealed except on the vote of five out of the six Consiglieri Ducali, twenty-five of the Forty, and two-thirds of the Great Council.

"6. That, within the first fifteen days of each year, the Consiglieri Ducali shall move the question whether the whole act is to stand or to be modified or repealed.

"7. That the heads of the Forty shall post the names of those who are about to be balloted for three days before the election takes place. That thirty shall constitute a quorum of the Forty."

This measure was carried. But its terms were not stringent enough to satisfy the new aristocracy. Their body was not yet sufficiently close; a seat in the Great Council could be obtained too easily. In 1298 the act was amended; a majority of the Forty, in place of only twelve votes, became indispensable to secure a seat. In the same year the list of selected candidates was confined to those who could prove that a paternal ancestor had at some time sat in the Great Council. In the year 1315 the government opened an official record<sup>1</sup> of all those who possessed the requisite qualifications, and whose names could be submitted to the ballot.

A rush of citizens to establish their nobility, to secure a place in the governing class before it should be too late, took place. Abuses soon appeared in the register: parents entered the names of illegitimate children, and the severe decrees of 1316 and 1319

<sup>1</sup> This register formed the prototype of the so-called *Libro d'Oro*, or register of births and marriages among the nobility. The birth register was opened on August 31, 1506, and the marriage register on April 26, 1528. Romanin, *op. cit.* ii. 349.

became necessary to purge the list. The Avvogadori di Commun were entrusted with inquisitorial powers to examine family history; the duties of a herald's office were added to their functions. If they admitted a name to the register, that was taken as sufficient proof of its qualification. The office of the three electors was abolished. All those whose names appeared on the register were, on attaining the age of twenty-five, considered eligible to a seat in the Maggior Consiglio.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the closing of the Great Council was in any sense a *coup d'état*. The constitutional history of Venice had been tending in that direction for more than a century, and the actual measure was not passed at one stroke, or by unconstitutional violence; several years elapsed before it could be finally established. Nor was it an absolute and rigid closing of the council; a little stream of fresh blood might still creep in through the grace of the doge and the three electors, although it is true that the free circulation from the people, the heart of the state, was effectually choked. The decree virtually cancelled family history previous to 1172, the date when the Great Council was formally established. It mattered not how old a family might be, nor what services it might have rendered to the state; if, by some accident, none of its members, during these hundred and twenty-four years, had sat in the Maggior Consiglio, that family now became disfranchised, unrepresented, robbed of all share in ruling the state it may have helped to make. The result of the statute was to divide the population into two classes. The one, by an accident of parentage, had a right to claim a seat in the Great Council of Venice; the other had no such right, nor any hope of obtaining it, but by the exceptional grace of men who, before the passing of the act, were, constitutionally, their equals. And these graces were rendered more and more difficult to secure, till, in



the year 1328, they seem to have ceased altogether; nor were they renewed till after the war of Chioggia, in the year 1380, when an addition of thirty families was made to the roll of the Venetian patriciate.

To be deprived of a seat in the Great Council was to be doomed for life to political silence in Venice. The way to all honours, to all activity, lay through that assembly; those who were excluded were, in fact, disfranchised. The aristocracy had effected their object; they had robbed a free people of their rights and converted them to their own sole use. When we think of the injustice of the act we cannot wonder that the closing of the Great Council caused a conspiracy which shook Venice to her foundations.

The new aristocracy triumphed; but doubtless they did not expect to be left in undisturbed enjoyment of their victory. Nor were they, although their opponents, the old aristocracy and the people, failed to unite their forces, the only course which offered any prospect of success against the victorious party. The popular indignation was the first to make itself felt. In the year 1300 Marco Bocconio, a man of respectable but not of noble family, organized a rising of the populace.<sup>1</sup> He proved unequal to his task. The doge was warned in time; the conspiracy never had the deadliness of secrecy. We may dismiss this futile attempt almost as curtly as the chronicler Sanudo does.<sup>2</sup> "It is written," he says, "that the doge took good means to have the conspirators in his hands, and had them." Good means, truly. Bocconio and his friends had determined on a physical assertion of their right to enter the Great Council. Followed by a mass of the people, they presented themselves at the door of the chamber and knocked. Those inside were ready;

<sup>1</sup> See Rom. *op. cit.* vol. iii. cap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi*, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Scrip.* tom. xxii. p. 581.



the door was opened, and, in the doge's name, the leaders were invited to enter, one by one, that they might submit to the ballot and win their seat. Bocconio and ten of his followers passed in; they were instantly seized and executed in the prisons; the voice of this revolt was stifled beneath the waters of the lagoon that hid so many Venetian secrets. After the leaders were despatched, between five and six hundred of their supporters are said to have suffered death. "And so," to quote the chronicler again, "ended this sedition, in such wise that no one dared any more to open his mouth after a like fashion."<sup>1</sup>

Not after a like fashion, it is true; for the people had entered their protest, had struck their blow, and had failed. It remained for the old conservative party to make their attempt against the revolution which had been effected. But they were not ready yet, and were by no means unwilling to wait. Time was all in their favour, for the foreign policy of the Doge Gradenigo and his followers was daily deepening the hatred against them. The doge's insistence on the Venetian claim to Ferrara had involved the republic in a disastrous war; it had also brought Venice into collision with the pope. The Holy See had revived its title to the Ferrarese, and after repeated orders to the Venetians to retire from before Ferrara, there came a sentence of excommunication against the state of Venice. The clergy left the city; the sacraments were refused; burial, even, with religious rites was denied. The sentence weighed heavily on the people. But worse was to follow. The excommunication was supported by the publication of a crusade; liberty and indulgence were given to any attack upon Venetian subjects or property. In England, in France, in Italy, in the East, the merchants were robbed. From Southampton to Pera Venetian counting-houses, banks, and factories were

<sup>1</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi*, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Scrip. loc. cit.*

forced, sacked, and destroyed. The commerce of Venice trembled on the verge of extinction; and all these evils were laid at the door of the doge and the new aristocracy. But the party in power never wavered; their determination was the result and the proof of their youth, their confidence, their real capacity for governing. Though surrounded by a people suffering intensely from physical and spiritual want, as well as by a nobility who openly professed hatred of the ruling policy and of its authors, the new aristocracy deviated not for a single moment from the predetermined line. Everything was done to win the regard and the support of the people. The doge instituted a yearly banquet to the poor and the picturesque ceremony of washing and kissing twelve fishermen from the lagoons. Steps were also taken to humble, insult, and ridicule the old nobility. Marco Querini was refused a seat among the ducal councillors, and the place was bestowed on Doimo, Count of Veglia,<sup>1</sup> in spite of a statute which forbade a Dalmatian to hold that office. The law against carrying arms in the streets was enforced with rigour. Marco Morosini, a "Lord of the night,"<sup>2</sup> met Pietro Querini one evening in the piazza; in spite of Querini's protest Morosini insisted upon searching him; Querini knocked him down, and was, of course, fined heavily. Matters were approaching a crisis.

But the real difficulty of the old nobility lay in the want of a leader. After holding several meetings at the house of Marco Querini, they determined to invite

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol iii. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> This was the picturesque name for the three heads of the police patrol in Venice. "Il diavolo che attendava alla rovina di questo governo porse in animo a Marco Morosini, Signore di Notte, di voler sapere se Pietro Querini della casa Grande, fratello di Messier Marco, aveva armi; et accostandosi a lui li disse; lasciati cercare; perciò lui irato gettò per terra esso Morosini" (Marco Barbaro, *Chronicle*, quoted by Rom. *loc. cit. sup.*).

Bajamonte Tiepolo,<sup>1</sup> the son-in-law of Marco, to come to Venice and head the party. He was the grandson of the Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo and Marchesina, daughter of Boemond of Brienne, King of Servia. He was, therefore, great-grandnephew of John of Brienne, the Emperor of Constantinople and King of Jerusalem. In the year 1300 he had been condemned for peculation in one of the governments he had held. But execution of the sentence was postponed, and two years later he was elected a member of the Supreme Court of the Quarantia.<sup>2</sup> But in the same year he withdrew to his

<sup>1</sup> Bartolo Tiepolo, 1062.

Marco, 1137.

Giacomo, doge, m. Gualdrada,  
dr. of Tancred of Sicily.

Lorenzo, doge, m. Marchesina of Brienne.

Jacopo *dello Scopulo*.

Bajamonte.

See Litta, *Famig. celebri Italiane*, in voce *Tiepolo*; *Bullettino di Arti e Curiosità Veneziane*, ann. iv. nos. 3-4, 1895; Laurentius de Monacis, *Chronicon*, lib. xiv. p. 274; Roman. *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 294; *Cronaca Veneta, da Canal*, cap. cclxiii. note 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Venice.

Magnus. M. C. Delib. fol. 8.

1300.

Die. xvj Junij. Cum ser Baimonte Teupulo condam Castellanus Coroni et Mothoni acceperit de peccunia Comunis yperpera mmccxxij. ultra suum salarium et poneretur pars utrum videretur quod ipse accepisset dictam peccuniam contra suam commissionem vel non, Capta fuit pars de sic. Et fuerunt cxxvij. de sic, decem de non, cxxvij. non sinceris.

Ego Thomas Viadro. manu mea subscripsi. Ego Marinus Mauroceno m. m. ff. Ego Jacobus Baruci m. m. ff. Ego Rubertus Teupulo m. m. ff. Ego Petrus ducatus Veneciarum scribe de mandato dictorum dominorum suprascripta duo consilia cancellavi.

Magnus. M. C. Delib. fol. 15.

1301.

vj. Junij. Capta fuit pars quod fiat gratia nobili viro Baiamonti Teupulo condam Castellano Corone et Modhone quod solvat



villa of Marocco,<sup>1</sup> near Mestre, where he remained until 1310, when the invitation of his brother nobles reached him. He readily answered their appeal, and his arrival in Venice was of the greatest service to his party. For Bajamonte was a man of strong, impetuous, and decided character, the owner of vast wealth and of an almost unbounded popularity with the people, who called him the *gran cavaliere*;<sup>2</sup> while, on the other hand, he was connected with most of the noble families who were strenuously opposing the new aristocracy.

On the arrival of Bajamonte the ferment of discontent was precipitated. Meetings were held at the house of Marco Querini, in which the hopes and designs of the party were discussed, and steps taken to achieve them. Marco himself led the way, dwelling bitterly on the ruin which the new aristocracy had brought upon the state, urging the dangers of the Ferrarese war and the horrors of the excommunication. But above all he insisted on the injustice of the

totum capitale pecunia per eum accepte in Corona et Modhona hinc ad tres annos isto modo videlicet statim nonam partem solvat nostro communi, et in fine iiij. mensium aliam nonam partem dicti capitalis, et sic deinceps in fine quorum libet quattuor mensium solvat nonam partem quousque erit dictum capitale plenarie solutum totum sub pena solidorum v pro libra pro quolibet termino non observato et de sic observando det ydoneum pleçariam ad voluntatem domini ducis.

Ego Nicolo Arimodo manu mea subscripsi. Ego Franciscus Dandolo. m. m. ff. Ego Marinus Ialetro. m. m. ff. Ego Justinianus Justiniano. m. m. ff. Ego Henricus Michael m. m. ff.

Nota quod die vij. Junij Nobiles viri domini Michael Teupulo, Franciscus Longo, Jacobus quirino de domo maiori; Petrus Causoni, Paulus de Musto, et Marcus çiani fuerunt et steterunt omnes pleçij et proprij appacatores in toto et in parte pro dicto domino Baiamonte, quod observabit secundum partem predictam.

Ego Johannes Calderarius notarius de mandato . . . suprascripta die.

Caresini, *Contin. Chron. And. Dand.* p. 492, ap. Murator. *Rer. It. Scrip.* xii.; Vianoli, *Hist. Venet.* (Venetia: 1680), lib. xii.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Navagero, *St. Venez.* ad ann. 1310, ap. Murat. *Rer. It. Scrip.* xxiii.



act that closed the Great Council, whereby many noble and virtuous citizens were excluded from all share in the government of the state. Bajamonte followed his father-in-law, enforcing his argument and urging immediate action. He concluded thus: "Let us leave, let us leave words on one side now, and come to deeds. Let us place a good prince at the head of this state; one who shall be acceptable to all classes, beloved by the people, ready so to act that our city may be restored to her ancient ordinances, that public freedom may be preserved and increased." Tiepolo expressed the general feeling. The party was eager for action; but Jacopo Querini, the oldest and most cautious of their number, now rose to counsel moderation. He implored them to move by constitutional, not by revolutionary steps; he warned them not to trust the people for support;<sup>1</sup> while, fully recognizing the unendurable position in which they were placed by the closing of the Great Council, he insisted that this should be corrected by legal, not by illegal and violent measures. But the nobles felt that the advice of Jacopo Querini came too late. Pacific measures were out of the question. The speech of Tiepolo indicated the lines on which they must act. Nothing remained but to develop the plot. The conspirators agreed that the doge should be attacked in his palace, and that he and as many as possible of the new aristocracy should be slain. One of their own party, Badoer Badoer, was sent to Padua, with instructions to bring with him all the men he could induce to help in the attack. They fixed on June 15 as the day for the execution of their design. The associates were to meet in the house of Querini on the evening of the 14th, a Sunday.

<sup>1</sup> "Sperate aver il popolo favorevole? ma il popolo, come a tutti è noto, è cosa vana ed instabile." A true warning as it proved, though I doubt whether the sentiment is of the epoch. See *Cronaca*, Barbaro, quoted by Rom. vol. iii. p. 31; also Vianoli, *Hist. Venet.* (Venetia: 1680), lib. xii.

The evening came and the nobles assembled. So far these meetings had been conducted with the utmost secrecy. But now information was brought to the doge<sup>1</sup> that there was an unusual and suspicious stir about the houses of the Querini and in all the quarter beyond the Rialto. Gradenigo at first refused to believe that this movement had any significance, but he thought it prudent to send three members of the government to inquire into the meaning of the report. The officials were met with drawn swords whenever they crossed the Rialto, and were forced to fly for their lives. The doge grasped the situation at once, and lost no time. He sent messengers to the *podestà* of Chioggia, and to the governors of Murano, Burano, and Torcello, demanding their aid. The officers of state, the Consiglieri, the Avvogadori, the Signori di Notte, were summoned to the palace armed. The town on St. Mark's side of the canal was roused from its sleep—for the night had already far advanced towards morning—and all good citizens were called upon to march to the piazza, there to defend the doge and the state.<sup>2</sup> These measures, rapidly as they were carried out, occupied some time, and the day was already dawning. In the dim twilight, and under a threatening sky, the doge and his company left the ducal palace and descended into the piazza. There guards were stationed at the mouths of the different streets that opened on the square, while the main body was drawn up in the piazza itself, eagerly expecting help from Chioggia, and waiting the event.

Meantime, on the other side of the canal, affairs had nearly reached the climax. The piazza, then as now the heart of the city, was the point at which Tiepolo intended to aim his blow. The conspirators had determined to divide their forces. One body, under Bajamonte, was to march through the Merceria

<sup>1</sup> The traitor was Marco Donato, who had at first joined the conspiracy.

<sup>2</sup> Laurentius de Mon. *op. cit.* lib. xiv. p. 275.

emerging on the piazza by the street where the clock tower now stands; the other, under Marco Querini, was to find its way to the same point by the Ponte di Malpasso.<sup>1</sup> All was ready for the start, when a violent storm broke over Venice; wind, thunder, lightning, and rain descending in torrents. The storm seemed ominous and terrified Tiepolo's followers. He delayed his departure, hoping that it might pass by, and, in order to amuse and occupy his company, he gave them permission to sack the offices of the police magistrates and the corn exchange.

But the rain did not cease, and precious time could not be wasted indefinitely. Too much had been lost already; help was on its way for the doge; every instant lessened the chances of success. The conspirators crossed the Rialto. But they soon found, as they advanced, that they had miscalculated the temper of the people. Each step towards the piazza showed the populace to be more and more hostile. The vigour and calmness of the doge had overawed those who were immediately within his reach, and had counselled them to be on that side which their instinct told them was the winning one. But more than that, the present rebellion was the protest of the nobles against the *Serrata*, as that of Bocconio had been the popular protest. The latter had failed, and the people were not prepared to try their fortune again. Perhaps they were more than doubtful whether the success of Tiepolo would really restore to them their lost rights. However that might be, the conspirators found no support, no signs of a rising in their favour. In accordance with the plan agreed upon, they divided into two companies. By some miscalculation Querini arrived at the piazza first. As he debouched upon the square, the doge's troops charged with the cry of "Ah! traditore; ammazza! ammazza!" Marco and his two sons were instantly killed and his followers routed before Tiepolo could

<sup>1</sup> Now the Ponte de Dai.



come to his assistance. A like defeat awaited him. As he passed along the Merceria, a woman hurled a mortar from a balcony,<sup>1</sup> which slew Bajamonte's standard-bearer, who was marching in the van with a banner on which was embroidered the word "Liberty." A few moments later, Tiepolo himself and his followers were flying from the piazza in confusion, to seek safety on the other side of the Rialto. They broke down the bridge and destroyed the boats, and thus gained for themselves a breathing space. They were still in considerable force; and if Badoer had arrived from Padua, it might yet have been possible for them to make some head against the doge. The news, however, that Badoer with his boats had run aground in the lagoon, where the *podestà* of Chioggia had captured him and all his men, dashed that hope. The game had been played and lost. Nothing remained but to make such terms as they could with Gradenigo and his victorious party.

The leniency of the conditions offered by the doge proves how unwilling the new aristocracy were to push their victory too hard. All the citizens who had followed Tiepolo were allowed to make their peace by swearing allegiance to the doge and the constitution. The heads of the conspiracy were banished for four years to certain definite localities; but all of them, including their chief, broke their confines, in spite of the declaration that in that case their property would be treated "*sicut de proditoribus et rebellibus*."<sup>2</sup> This violation of their bounds resulted in a decree of

<sup>1</sup> Cicogna (*Iscrizioni Veneziane*, tom. iii. p. 30) doubts whether the mortar was flung on purpose or was pushed over by accident. He gives the name of the woman as Lucia, but Cecchetti (*Arch. Ven.* tom. xxv. p. 144) has established the fact that she was called Maria de Oltise. The doge Gradenigo offered to reward her, but she declined any recognition of her service save the right to hang the standard of St. Mark from her window on St. Vitus' Day and on other solemn occasions, and a promise that her rent, of fifteen ducats a year, should never be raised. See Molmenti, *Vita Privata*, part i. p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi*, p. 586, ap. Murat. *Rer. It. Script.* tom. xxii.; *Bullettino*, *op. cit.* p. 34.



perpetual exile against Tiepolo, and the confiscation of all his goods. The houses of the Tiepolo were razed,<sup>1</sup> and the family arms of both the Tiepolo and Querini were cancelled.<sup>2</sup>

Tiepolo was banished in perpetuity, and, for the years that remained to him, he flitted like an unladen ghost round the borders of his native land. From Dalmatia, from Padua, from Treviso, he looked towards Venice, and sighed for the *campi*, the *contrade*, the water-ways of that home no longer his. But each sigh was a menace to the new party now consolidating itself on the ruins of the older nobility. The government was never at rest for a moment while the spectral form of Tiepolo remained unburied. We find proposals for an amnesty to be extended to him, invitations to him to return. These may have been ruses to get him into their power—we cannot tell; in any case, they were not accepted. Bajamonte is the centre of innumerable plots, all doomed to failure; but he could not abandon them while he lived. He was the spirit of the old aristocracy that would not cease to hope as long as there was breath. In the year 1311 we find him conspiring at Padua<sup>3</sup>; later

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. di Stato*, Maggior Consiglio, *Presbiter*, fol. 22 v°. 1310, die xxv. julii. "Item quod domus quondam Baiamontis Teupulo proditoris diruinetur."

<sup>2</sup> The Querini bore per fesse azure and gules; the Tiepolo, azure, a castle of three towers, argent. See Coronelli, *Blazone Veneto*, and Freschot, *La Nobilità Veneta*; *Commém.* lib. i. Nos. 435, 448; Laurentius, *op. cit.* lib. xiv. p. 227, where a list of the conspirators is given, together with their places of exile; And. Dand. *Chronicon*, p. 410, ap. Murat. *Rer. It. Scrip.* xii.; Caresini, *Contin. Chron. Dand.* pp. 490, 491, 492, where the sentences are recorded; also see p. 483 for the letters of Gradenigo recounting the conspiracy.

<sup>3</sup> Laurentius, *loc. cit.* pp. 277, 278; *Commém.* lib. i. No. 476, 1876. Tiepolo tried to interest some of the family of Carrara in his designs. Scrovegno, on their behalf, went so far as to promise him eight hundred men. Venice was seriously alarmed, and increased the guards on the lagoon shores at San Giuliano. But the scheme fell through (Rom. *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 43, 44; Verci, *St. della Marca Trivigiana*, vol. viii. doc. 862, ann. 1318, Feb. 21).

he is hunted from Treviso. In 1322 the Ten offer a sum for his capture in Dalmatia. In 1328 the doge is imperatively ordered to take steps to secure his person, if possible; but he escaped his enemies to the very last, and, on the point of falling into their hands, he died.

Tiepolo died, and with him died the old nobility as a dominant party in the state. He and it were killed by the new aristocracy. Tiepolo's object had been to preserve the old constitution of Venice; for in it he and his order, by long prescriptive right of birth and rule, were powerful. But this party failed to make common cause with the people, they neglected to win their confidence, and they went down before the younger and stronger order. Had Tiepolo succeeded, it is not impossible that Venice might have developed a constitutional government based on the three estates of prince, nobles, and people; but it was not given to her to escape the tendency which was bringing all Italy under the power of individual families of despots.

The new aristocracy triumphed and proceeded to follow unimpeded the law of its growth. Externally the government of the city was crystallized after the fall of Tiepolo. A full police system was developed—the patrols for the streets, the guards for the canals, the piazza, and the palazzo ducale. A native militia was raised by a levy of five hundred men from each of the six quarters of the city.<sup>1</sup> But freedom was not in the nature of the new aristocracy; its essence was opposed to liberty, and so it was doomed in turn to submit to itself as its own most tyrannous master. The danger it had just escaped was so great that, for its own immediate safety, it had recourse to a dictator. But following the inherent bent in the Venetian political constitution, that dictator was not an indi-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 40; *Commém.* lib. i. July, 1310, Nos. 438, 439; Marin. *op. cit.* vol. v. p. 320, doc. ii. "Provisions for the Defence of Venice."

vidual, but a committee, a college. The Council of Ten was appointed to examine the causes and to trace the ramifications of the Tiepoline conspiracy. Its tenure of office was limited at first to a few days, then extended to two months, then to five years; finally it was declared permanent, July 20, 1335, and became the lord, the Signore, the tyrant of Venice<sup>1</sup>—more terrible than any personal despot, because impalpable, impervious to the dagger of the assassin. It was no concrete despotism, but the very essence of tyranny. To seek its overthrow was vain. Those who strove to wrestle with it clasped empty air; they struck at it, but the blow was wasted on space. Evasive and pervasive, this dark, inscrutable body ruled Venice with a rod of iron. For good or for bad the Council of Ten was the very child of the new aristocracy, which had won its battle against both the people and the old nobility. The victorious party breathed and their breath became the Ten, and it is the Ten which determined the internal aspect of Venice for the remainder of her existence.

Such is the reading of events which facts seem to warrant. But, in the dense obscurity which hangs over all that might indicate beyond a doubt the true relations of the old aristocracy, the new party and the people, it has to be admitted that a somewhat different view is possible. It might be argued that the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. *op. cit.* vol. iii. cap. iii.; Giannotti, *Della Rep. d. Venez.* (Firenze: 1850), pp. 122-4; Sanudo, *op. cit.* p. 586; Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise* (Paris: 1870), p. 514. It is shown by the researches of Sig. Cecchetti that in all probability a Council of Ten did exist before the year 1310. But it is certain that that year saw the creation of the Ten as the power which was destined to rule Venice. See *Dell' Istituz. d. Magist. d. Rep.* Cecchetti (Venezia: 1865). And popular tradition was right when it fixed the date in the well-known rhyme—

Del mille tresento e diese  
A mezzo el mese delle ceriese  
Bagiamonte passò el ponte (the Rialto).  
E per esso fo fatto el consegio di diese.

episode was nothing more than a struggle between a *primo* and a *secondo popolo*, in which the people, properly so called, had little or no interest; that the issue lay between an old semi-feudal nobility and a wealthy middle class, eager to seize the reins of government; that each party was running a selfish race for the mastery in the state, and that a species of tyranny was inevitable, whichever won. It might be possible to maintain that the apparition, the struggle, and the triumph of the new nobility was only one step in a necessary evolution; that the victory brought with it not the element of death, but just that quality of rigid stability which preserved Venice longer than her sister Italian states. What remains, however, as important to Venetian history in this period is that the Tiepoline conspiracy marks the point at which the central element in the government was fixed. From that moment Venice appears with the peculiar constitution which, for better or for worse, was to distinguish her from the rest of Italy.



## Marino Falier

OF the two great conspiracies which shook the state of Venice—the conspiracy of Bajamonte Tiepolo and the conspiracy of Marino Falier—the latter has attracted by far the larger share of attention, and has taken its place permanently as one of the stirring episodes in the annals of the Republic. This, no doubt, is largely due to the dramatic character of the story as currently told. The fiery old warrior doge, insulted in the honour of his wife by a ribald young noble, exasperated against the whole body of the Venetian aristocracy by the inadequate punishment meted out to his offender, conceived the idea of murderous revenge, and put himself at the head of a conspiracy—fomented chiefly among the middle and lower classes—to slaughter the entire governing caste. The plot was discovered only just in time, and the doge and his accomplices paid the penalty with their lives. The thrilling spectacle of the black veil over the place where the doge's portrait should be, in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, has helped to fix the attention and rouse the curiosity of thousands of tourists. Byron<sup>1</sup> fastened upon the story and made it the subject of his finest play, though he misreads the intention of the doge, painting him as a friend of liberty, anxious to free the people from the intolerable tyranny of the oligarchy, and importing

<sup>1</sup> Byron claims to have carefully studied the sources and maintains the historical value of his view ; it is curious, however, to note that he could write thus about the famous statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni : "The equestrian statue of which I have made mention in the third act is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date."

into his drama modern ideas quite foreign to the period. It happens therefore that the story of Marino Falier's conspiracy occupies a larger place in popular imagination than does the conspiracy of Tiepolo, though the one created the Council of Ten while the other merely demonstrated its supremacy.

Marin Sanudo, in the *Lives of the Doges*,<sup>1</sup> has, hitherto, been the principal authority for the story as related by most modern historians, and though recent criticism has rejected as legendary many of the more striking episodes, still we shall see by a comparison of the current and the critical accounts that, after all, the proverb is justified which says, "There's aye some water where they say the stirkie was droun'd." The larger part of Sanudo's tale is based, he says, upon "an ancient chronicle," which has not yet been identified. It is from Sanudo that we get the picturesque touches—unrecorded by any contemporary document—of the blow administered to the Bishop of Treviso, who kept Falier waiting when he was governor of the city; of the landing in the fog; of Steno's insolent conduct to one of the dogressa's maids-of-honour at a ball in the ducal palace; of his expulsion by order of the doge; of the revenge he took by scribbling on the ducal throne the ribald lines:<sup>2</sup>

Doge Marin Falier  
Has a wife that is fair;  
He pays the bill,  
Other fellows take their fill.

It is Sanudo, too, who tells us of the mild punishment<sup>3</sup> inflicted on Steno, and the doge's indignation at this slight to his person; of the quarrel between a gentleman of the Barbaro family and one of the arsenal hands who sought redress from the doge; of Falier's

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.* tom. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> "Marin Falier doxe da la bela moier, altri la galde et lu la mantien."

<sup>3</sup> Sanudo gives two versions of the penalty: (1) two months' imprisonment and banishment for a year; (2) a few days' imprisonment, a few strokes with a fox's tail, and a fine of one hundred lire.

bitter protest that he was impotent in face of the insolent aristocracy. It is Sanudo who gives us the conversation which followed, and the suggestion that the doge, with the help of the arsenal hands, should make himself lord of Venice, cut the nobles to pieces, and so avenge both insults. For the rest of the story, Sanudo agrees with the earlier and better authorities.

These authorities have recently been most carefully examined, compared, and arranged in order of value by Signor Vittorio Lazzarini in a work<sup>1</sup> which is no doubt the final word on the narrative of the Marino Falier conspiracy. Following Signor Lazzarini, we may take these authorities in the following order: (1) official documents; (2) inedited contemporary evidence; (3) published Venetian chronicles, contemporary or nearly so; (4) foreign contemporary evidence; (5) later chronicles.

Naturally we turn first to the archives at the Frari and to the documents of the Council of Ten, the tribunal that tried and sentenced the doge. The papers relating to the epoch of Marino Falier are contained in the series marked *Misti*, reg. <sup>5</sup>/<sub>(4)</sub>, the volume being really volume 5, numbered 4 in error. There on the recto of folio 33, between the documents of April 8, 1355, and the election of officers for the month of May—that is to say, in the place where the documents relating to the conspiracy should have appeared—we find a blank space with “Non scribatur” twice written on the margin. This phrase, “be it not written,” has given rise to fanciful conjectures on the part of such good scholars as Romanin and Rawdon Brown. “Un onorevole pudor,” writes Romanin, “forse ritenne quei giudici dallo scrivere il nome del capo della repubblica”;<sup>2</sup> and Rawdon Brown supposes that the marginal note indicates some unusual procedure

<sup>1</sup> *Marino Faliero, la Congiura* (Venezia: Visentini, 1897). I must here acknowledge my indebtedness to Signor Lazzarini's masterly study.

<sup>2</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 312.



on the part of the Ten. As a matter of fact, "Non scribatur" is a common formula of the Venetian chancellery indicating that the space opposite the marginal note was to be left blank for the reception of documents not yet ready for registration. Had "Non scribatur" meant that the space was to be left blank permanently, the words would naturally have been written in the centre of the space and not in margin. The fact that "Non scribatur" is repeated twice indicates that two documents were to have been inserted, but it is by no means certain that these documents referred to the case of Marino Falier. It is more probable that the whole of the papers relating to the conspiracy were collected in a separate volume. This conjecture is supported by the fact that in the margin of a decree of the Ten<sup>1</sup> dated January 13, 1355-6, providing that the sentences in the Falier case shall never be revoked, we find the phrase "Ponatur in libro processuum"; and in a marginal note to the decree of May 7, 1355, instituting the procession on Saint Isidore's day, we read the signs "M.F.c. 5," in all probability referring to fol. 5 of this book thus indicated by the initials of Marino Falier's name.<sup>2</sup> The "book of the trials" is now unfortunately lost, and the papers of the Council of Ten tell us next to nothing about the most remarkable case that ever came before that court.

But as regards the episode of Steno's insult to the doge which contributed to precipitate the conspiracy, thanks to the industry of Sanudo, we have the copy<sup>3</sup> of several cases heard before the Avvogadori di Commun, which, as we shall see when we come to narrate the events of the conspiracy, give us the true version of the Steno episode. This is all that can be found in the archives at the Frari.

Among the contemporary inedited evidence the first

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv. di Stato*, Cons. x. : Misti, reg. 5, fol. 44 v°.

<sup>2</sup> *Archiv. di Stato*, Cons. x. ; Misti, reg. 5, fol. 44 v°.

<sup>3</sup> *Archiv. di Stato*, Miscellanea, cod. N. 678.



place undoubtedly belongs to the chronicle of Nicolò Trevisan<sup>1</sup> of Sant' Angelo, who was one of the Ten when the doge was tried and executed.<sup>2</sup> He was subsequently governor of Crete; and died Procurator of San Marco in 1369. Apart from the fact that Trevisan was a contemporary and also an actor in the drama, his account commands attention by its accuracy and its sobriety. Following Trevisan, we have the contemporary chronicle of Pietro Giustinian<sup>3</sup> (1360). An anonymous chronicler<sup>4</sup> writing in 1396 adds some further facts; while the chronicle of Antonio Morosini<sup>5</sup> gives us one important passage as to the cause of the conspiracy.

Of published Venetian evidence the most valuable is the chronicle of Lorenzo de Monacis.<sup>6</sup> Lorenzo was a scholar, a poet, an historian, a statesman, having served as Grand Chancellor in Crete, and his narrative is full and convincing; unfortunately, however, it stops abruptly in the very middle of the story of Falier's conspiracy. Rafaino Caresini, Notary Ducal at the time, and afterwards Grand Chancellor of the Republic,<sup>7</sup> who probably knew the truth, hardly mentions the subject, restrained no doubt by the delicacy of his position as an official. Among the foreign evidence we get two contemporaries—Petrarch, who knew Falier intimately, "vir ab olim mihi familiariter notus,"<sup>8</sup> and Matteo Villani, who seems to have had sound information from some contemporary correspondent in Venice.

Finally, among later writers who treat of the Falier conspiracy we have Sabellico's *De Vitis Principum*;

<sup>1</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. xi. Ital. cod. xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> "Di Diexe io posso assai rendere testimonianza," he says himself.

<sup>3</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. x. Lat. cod. xxxvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmli.

<sup>5</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmxlviii.

<sup>6</sup> Laurentii de Monacis, *Chronica de rebus Venetis* (Venetiis : Remondini, 1759).

<sup>7</sup> Muratori, *RR. II. SS.* xii. 423.

<sup>8</sup> Petrarch, *Epistola Famil.* lib. xix. ep. xi. "Rumores italicos."

Sanudo, whose unidentified *Cronaca Antica* we have already mentioned; a chronicle attributed to Zancarolo<sup>1</sup>; the chronicle of Daniele Barbaro, who claims to base his narrative on secret papers, though he varies but slightly from the Sanudo legend; and many others whose accounts of the episode may be broadly classed as adhering either to the *Cronaca Trevisan* or to Sanudo.

Following the more trustworthy of these authorities—that is to say, first, such few official documents as survive, and secondly, the Chronicle of Nicolò Trevisan and the Chronicle of Lorenzo de Monacis—we may proceed to reconstruct the story of Marino Falier and his conspiracy.

Perhaps in no state of importance equal to that of Venice are we left in such obscurity as to personal details regarding its great men; material for biographies of leading Venetian statesmen and soldiers is singularly scanty. Venice demanded and secured the effacement of the individual, and impressed upon its citizens, one and all, that the state was everything, the individual nothing. The consequence is that the life of a distinguished Venetian, in so far as we can recover it, is little more than a bare record of the offices he filled; his policy, his ability, his achievements are rarely associated with his own name, and are to be looked for not in the history of the man but in the development of the State. So it is with Marino Falier. He belonged to that branch of the family which was settled in the parish of the SS. Apostoli, and was born between the years 1280 and 1285, probably in the family palace which looks across the Rio dei SS. Apostoli to the cupola of the church, and is carried on columns over a sottoportico. His father was Jacopo Falier and his mother Beriola Loredan; his blood therefore was the oldest in Venice, and his connections of the highest. We know hardly anything of his youth. In all proba-

<sup>1</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mcclxxiv.

bility he attended the school of some grammarian, and then passed into commercial life, frequenting the Rialto and making voyages in the trading galleys. In due time he would take his seat in the Great Council and begin his political career. In 1313, when he was about thirty years of age, we find him one of the Chiefs of the Ten, and in 1320 he is dealing with English affairs in the Great Council.<sup>1</sup> In January of 1320 he was entrusted with the delicate and dangerous mission of hunting down (*sollicite et attente*) the conspirators Bajamonte Tiepolo and Piero Quirini. From this time onwards Marino Falier was constantly employed either on missions abroad or in public offices at home. His knowledge of affairs was enlarged by his service as Governor of Negropont in 1323, of Lesina and Brazza in 1334, of Chioggia in 1337, 1342, 1347, and 1349. In 1335 he married Alvica Gradenigo, a niece of the great Doge Piero Gradenigo who carried the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio* and established the aristocratic caste—a marriage which doubtless tended to strengthen Falier's social position and political influence. He was now fifty years old. When Treviso came into the hands of Venice in 1339, Falier was appointed its first Governor, and it was at Treviso, during the period of his second governorship in 1346, that legend relates how, on Corpus Domini day, in the cathedral, Falier, in a fit of blind fury, struck the bishop who was bearing the Host, because he had kept the procession waiting—a deed which is said to have called down the wrath of heaven, and to have led him to ruin, though no chroniclers, whether Trevisan or Venetian, earlier than the middle of the following century, mention the episode, the strict veracity of which we may question, though it doubtless gives us some indication of the temper of the man. By this time Falier's reputation had spread beyond the borders

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, M.C. *Fronesis*, March 13, 1320, Jan. 27, 1320-1 [m.v.], May 14, 1321.



of Venice, and we find him twice called to act as *podestà* in Padua, where he acquired the friendship of the Carraresi, and probably made the acquaintance of Petrarch. In July, 1349, with the consent of the Republic, Falier received from the Count-Bishop of Ceneda the investiture of the fief of Val di Marena, near Serravalle, in the Marca Trevigiana, and assumed the title of Count of Val di Marena.

Nor was his reputation as a diplomatist and a soldier less striking. He served on embassies to Avignon, to the Duke of Austria, to the Republic of Genoa (when the friction between the rival maritime states was approaching a burning point over trade in the Black Sea), to the Emperor Charles IV., 1350 (on which occasion he was knighted and named privy councillor). Falier, moreover, achieved distinction both in the army and in the fleet. He was captain of the galleys of Constantinople and the Black Sea, with commission to protect Venetian trade; he took a brilliant part in the siege of Zara, which had rebelled; he was serving under Civran, and acquired for himself the epithet "*audax*," when that general won the glorious victory of July, 1346, over the King of Hungary. In 1348 he was elected to the supreme command of the forces sent to reduce Capo d'Istria, but did not arrive in time to take an active part in the operations. Later on, in 1352, he conducted a successful marauding campaign against the Genoese, and on behalf of the Republic he was put in possession of the island of Tenedos by the Emperor John Paleologus. Yet in spite of all this activity abroad Falier was no less fully occupied at home; he sat on commissions for enlarging the Merceria, and for putting down usury; he was in trading partnership with his brother Ordelafo and his cousin Nicolò. Among his family and his friends he was held in the highest esteem; his uncle Marino made him executor of his will; his brother left him absolutely free to dispose of his whole estate; he was frequently called on to



arbitrate between conflicting parties.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of his contemporaries he stood very high. Petrarch bears witness to his reputation for wisdom—a reputation which the poet regretfully admits was ill-founded; Matteo Villani records his valour and his judgment; Lorenzo de Monicis declares him to have been *reputatus tantæ gravitatis*; every writer expresses surprise and regret at his fall. In fact, in Marino Falier we have a fine figure of a Venetian noble in the Middle Ages—active, capable, respected, enjoying a great position and displaying striking ability; and yet this is the man who, within eight months of his election to the supreme dignity in the state, threw all to the winds and embarked on an enterprise as rash as it was criminal. No wonder that his conduct amazed and puzzled his contemporaries and has left the explanation of his conspiracy among the obscure problems of Venetian history.

On September 7, 1354, the Doge Andrea Dandolo died. The Great Council met for the election of the five *Correttori della Promissione ducale*, or revisers of the coronation oath, that powerful weapon which the aristocracy employed to restrict the authority of the doge. On the 9th the *Correttori* presented their proposed modifications. It is important to bear these in mind, for they may possibly have contributed to engender in Falier his hatred of the governing caste, the new aristocracy which had consolidated itself on the ruins of the Tiepoline conspiracy. The amendments were conceived in the usual spirit; their intention was to curtail the ducal power and prestige. Besides forbidding the doge to receive or to answer any diplomatic agent except in the presence of four ducal councillors and two chiefs of the Quarantia, the new doge was bound to observe all the regulations laid down for the guidance of his Council; the doge's intervention in matters financial and juridical

<sup>1</sup> For all these details, see Sig. Lazzarini's exhaustive study "Marin Falier avanti il Dogado," *Nov. Arch. Ven.* t. v. part i. 1893.

was further limited, and modifications and reductions were made in his salary and his dues. The Great Council approved the amendments, and then, after a prayer, *pro bono duce*, and after having taken the oath to abide by the result of the coming election, the council proceeded to nominate the forty-one electors. It seems that Falier's name was already in the air, for a special order was passed declaring that if a noble who was absent from Venice should be elected the regency should be put in commission till his return. This, in all probability, referred to Falier, who was then on an embassy to the Pope at Avignon. The forty-one then proceeded to write the names of the proposed candidates. Four names were put forward; on casting lots the name of Falier came up first. A ballot was taken on his candidature and resulted in his securing thirty-five votes. Falier was accordingly elected Doge of Venice on September 11, 1354, while absent from the country, "ducatus honor non petenti, imo quidem ignaro sibi obtigit."<sup>1</sup> The same day he was proclaimed and confirmed in a general assembly of the entire Venetian population. The day following the notary Stefano Ziera left for Verona with orders to procure from the lord of Milan a safe-conduct for Falier's journey through Lombardy. This done, Ziera set out for Avignon to inform Falier of his election and to present to the Pope and Cardinals the Republic's letters conveying the news. But Falier had already left Avignon, and on September 28 it was known in Venice that the new doge was at hand. Twelve nobles were elected as a solemn embassy to meet the prince; each took with him one noble and three pages as his suite. They found the doge at Verona, and brought him to Padua on Friday, October 3. At Padua they found waiting them fifteen *ganzaroli*—long, light boats with a covered cabin at the stern, rowed by thirty oars—and they started on their way down the Brenta. On Sunday

<sup>1</sup> Petrarch, *Epistolæ*, *loc. cit.*

the 5th they reached the lagoon at Fusina, where they found the *Bucintoro* and a crowd of boats come out from Venice. The doge went on board the great barge, and the tale goes that while crossing the lagoon a thick mist came down, so that the *Bucintoro* ran into the mud at S. Giorgio in Alega and remained there fast. The doge and his company took to the lighter boats and were brought to Venice, where, by an error due to the fog, he landed not at the Ponte della Paglia, but opposite the two columns of the Piazzetta—a place of evil augury as the scene of public executions. The doge passed between the columns on his way to S. Marco—an ominous fact noted by Petrarch immediately after the doge's death ("sinistro pede palatium ingressus"). In the church of S. Marco Falier was presented to the people and acclaimed, and then, on the upper landing-place of the stone staircase<sup>1</sup> leading from the loggia down into the courtyard of the ducal palace, he took the coronation oath and received the ducal bonnet.

When Falier came to the throne the condition of Venice was far from satisfactory, and there was general discontent, for various reasons, among all classes. The Genoese war was still raging. Genoa, after the crushing defeat of Lojera, had placed herself under the protection of Visconti, thereby complicating the situation. Venetian trade, especially in the Levant and in the Black Sea, was suffering severely from the desultory marauding campaign which was conducted chiefly by raids on Venetian shipping. The merchant class, therefore, and all who depended on them, were in a state of irritation and anxious for peace, which, rightly or wrongly, they supposed the nobles to be opposing. Falier himself had failed in his negotiations

<sup>1</sup> This staircase stood at the angle of the courtyard corresponding to the angle now occupied by the Giant Stairs. It was built in 1340, and pulled down when the renaissance façade was put up in the fifteenth century. See Lazzarini, *op. cit.* p. 37, note 4.



at Avignon, which were directed to that end. A few years earlier, in 1348, a great earthquake had brought down campaniles and houses, and this was followed by a terrible plague. The lazzar-boats went through the canals of the city to the cry of "Corpi morti!—corpi morti!" and the living flung the dead<sup>1</sup> from the windows on to the ghastly heap. Falier had not been long on the throne when the public mind was still further alarmed and exasperated by the serious defeat at Portolungo or Sapienza, whereby the Republic lost the whole of her fleet, and the Adriatic and Venice herself seemed to be at the mercy of the Genoese. This crushing reverse was entirely due to the negligence of some of the nobles in command, and the fact no doubt helped to intensify the discontent against the governing caste. Furthermore, the political disfranchisement, brought about by the closing of the Great Council, was still rankling in the minds of many well-born and well-to-do citizens, who found themselves excluded from all share in the government. The disorder and insolence of the young nobles, coupled with their incompetence at sea, justified the growing hatred.<sup>2</sup> The doge's action on receipt of the news from Sapienza is noteworthy in view of the tragedy so soon to overtake him. To counteract the effects of the defeat, he caused three experienced seamen, chosen from the people, not from the nobles, to be appointed to the command of the flying squadron destined to harry the Genoese, and his choice was fully justified by the result. The successes of Berti Vido, Piero Nani, Costantino Zucuoł stood out in high relief against the pusillanimity of the noble Nicolò Quirini, and the people began to feel that in the doge they had a sovereign who was not entirely the slave of the ruling caste.

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* iii. 155.

<sup>2</sup> For the conduct of the insolent nobility, see Lazzarini, *op. cit.* 56-61, where various cases of insult to the doge are recorded.



While the political atmosphere of Venice was at this pitch of tension, on November 10, 1354, the Avvogadori di Comun received instructions to proceed against certain persons accused of having written insulting words and drawn offensive figures in the "chamber of the chimneys" in the private apartments of the doge ("in magnum dedecus et vituperium totius terre"). Accordingly the following young nobles, Micheletto Steno, Pietro Bolani, Rizardo Marioni, Moreto Zorzi, Micheletto de Molin, and Mafeo Morosini, were arrested and tried. On November 20 the following sentences were passed: Michel Steno to be imprisoned for the rest of the month—that is, for ten days; Pietro Bolani to be imprisoned till the following Monday; Rizardo Marioni, who drew the offensive figures as well as wrote insulting words, to be imprisoned till the following Tuesday; while Zorzi, de Molin and Morosini were acquitted.<sup>1</sup> So far the official account; there is no mention of the dogaressa, but it is explicitly stated that the insults were levelled at the doge and his nephew ("scripsit multa enormia verba loquentia in vituperium domini ducis et ejus nepotis"). The account in the official documents is confirmed by Lorenzo de Monacis, but under an *on dit*. "Fama fuit," he writes, "quod se movit ad tantum flagitium [*i.e.* the conspiracy] quia aliqui adolescentuli nobiles scripserunt in augulis interioris palatii aliqua verba ignominiosa, et quod ipse magis incanduit quoniam adolescentuli illi parva fuerant ammadversione puniti"; and Lorenzo de Monacis is borne out by the Chronicle of Antonio Morosini,<sup>2</sup> which reports: "Alguna inzuria per alguny zovenety fioli de zintilomeni Veniexia di quel inzustamente fo ponidy." The contemporary authority, Nicolò Trevisan, is silent upon the point, but we must remember that this writer begins his narrative only with the conspiracy itself,

<sup>1</sup> See Lazzarini, *op. cit.* p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmmxlviii.

not with the preceding insult.<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo de Monacis and Antonio Morosini, then, confirm the fact of the insult to the doge as given by the official documents, and add that he was further incensed by the lightness of the punishment inflicted on the culprits, and they connect the doge's anger on this occasion with his share in the subsequent conspiracy; but in these earliest and best authorities there is no aspersion on the honour of the dogaressa—a legend introduced at a later period, and traceable to Sanudo and his anonymous *Cronaca Antica*. Lazzarini conjectures that there was an ancient family feud between the Falier and Steno families, basing his supposition on the fact that in August, 1343, Saray Falier, daughter of Ser Piero Falier, of San Maurizio, brought an action against Paulo Steno, of San Geremia, for house-breaking and rape committed on her person with the connivance of two of her servants, Beta, a German waiting-woman, and Zanino da Cremona, a lackey in the Falier house.<sup>2</sup> Steno was condemned to a year's imprisonment and three hundred lire damages. Lazzarini's conjecture is ingenious and probable, and young Michel Steno, when insulting the doge in his private apartments, may very likely have been expressing the feelings of his family, though the looseness of manners prevailing in Venice made such episodes common enough.

The insult took place in November, and we must suppose the doge to have been nursing his wrath in silence during the next four months, for there is no record of any action on his part which would indicate that his mind was set on active revenge. But the popular dissatisfaction with the governing caste was also smouldering, and in April, 1355, an event happened which brought the two currents of feeling

<sup>1</sup> After the dedication, the Chronicle begins: "Qui apresso se dirà l'ordine e muodo fo prozesso contra Messer Marin Falier dosie de Veniexia per prodezione."

<sup>2</sup> Lazzarini, *op. cit.* p. 571.

into contact, and revealed the doge's mind to the people and the people's mind to the doge.

In the council chamber of the Admiralty a quarrel suddenly sprang up between Giovanni Dandolo, a noble, and Bertuccio Ixarello, a sea-captain of great weight among the seafaring population.<sup>1</sup> Dandolo struck Bertuccio, who left the palace in a fury, and, gathering his friends about him in the piazzetta, began to walk up and down between the two columns and the Pietra del Bando at the Santa Sofia angle of S. Marco, waiting till Dandolo should come out. Dandolo was aware of the threatening attitude of the mob, and denounced the gathering to the government. The doge and his council summoned Bertuccio to their presence and severely reprimanded him, telling him that if he had a quarrel with Dandolo he must bring it before the appointed Court.

Sanudo again is responsible for a more highly coloured version of the case : Bertuccio's face cut open by Dandolo's ring, Bertuccio's private interview with the doge, and Falier's bitter complaint that as he had obtained no redress for Steno's insult, he was powerless to right a mere master-mariner, to which Bertuccio replied, "My Lord Duke, if you would make yourself prince and cut all these cuckoldy gentlemen to pieces, I have the courage to make you lord of Venice, if you will but lend me your aid."

But though this conversation may be apocryphal, our trustworthy Lorenzo de Monacis proceeds to say that, on the following night the doge as a fact did secretly send for Bertuccio, and opened his mind to him in all its bitterness against the nobility. They proceeded to lay out their designs. Bertuccio, "auctore et promotore duce," agreed to enroll twenty leading citizens, recruited from the merchant, banking, and seafaring

<sup>1</sup> Here we follow Lorenzo de Monacis. Trevisan's account does not begin till April 15, the crisis of the plot.



classes,<sup>1</sup> each of whom would answer for forty stout fellows who should be ready to do their bidding—that is to say, the forces at the disposal of the conspirators would amount to eight hundred men.<sup>2</sup> The plot matured rapidly, but of the twenty leaders only Bertuccio Ixarello, Filippo Calendario, Stefanello Trevisan, Antonio dalle Binde, and Nicoletto Doro were informed that the doge himself was “auctorem et conscium hujus conjurationis.”

The plan of the conspirators was this: on the evening of April 15 all the leaders, each with his forty followers, were to make for the piazza; either on the cry that the Genoese were off the Lido, or, as another account has it, on the outbreak of a fictitious brawl among themselves, the doge was to order the bell of S. Marco to be rung; this would bring the nobles flocking to the square, where they were to be cut to pieces as they came up. In the meantime, in order to exasperate the popular feeling against the nobility, the conspirators were to divide themselves into groups and scour the town at night, knocking at the doors of peaceable citizens and shouting insults to their wives and daughters, then whistling to each other, and calling each other by the names of noble families.

The secret was well kept; the plot ripened; April 15 was approaching. But on the very day preceding the night appointed for the rising the doge sent for Nicolò Zucuol, son of the Costantino Zucuol who, by the doge's influence, had been given the command of a flying squadron. Nicolò Zucuol was a man of the middle class, rich, of great weight with the people

<sup>1</sup> An analysis of the professions of the conspirators gives us the following results: one stonemason, Calendario; one money-changer and banker; one clerk in the customs; one notary; one engineer; one dyer; one leather merchant; ten seamen, or persons connected with the sea and shipping.

<sup>2</sup> The anonymous chronicler (*Bib. Mar.* cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmli.) mentions among the conspirators “Ser Marco Mudazo de Chastello patron de nave con molti suoi marinari valentissimi homeni.”



of his own rank, and an intimate friend of the doge. Unfortunately, Lorenzo de Monacis, who furnishes this information, breaks off his narrative just at this point, but Matteo Villani comes to our help. He tells us that the doge, whose object evidently was to secure the support of the class represented by Zucuol, laid before his friend the whole plot, which was on the very point of being carried into execution; but instead of support he met with opposition from Zucuol, and entreaties to abandon the scheme before it was too late. Villani goes on to say that the doge, in alarm, accepted his friend's advice, and empowered him to seek out the leading conspirators and to order them, in his name, to proceed no further with the design; as warrant for this order the doge gave Zucuol his signet ring. When the populace learned this change of plan, they considered themselves betrayed by the doge. If Villani's story be correct, this would account for the attitude of the people. But it differs from the story as told by Trevisan, to whom we now return. At the hour of supper on April 15—that is, shortly after Zucuol had seen the doge—Vendrame, a leather merchant, one of the conspirators who was not aware that the doge was in the plot, being a particular friend of Messer Nicolò Lion, a patrician, went to Lion's house and told him that there was to be a rising in Venice headed by Bertuccio Ixarello, Stefano Trevisan, and many others, whose object was to upset the state of Venice ("chon intenzion de rovezar el stato de Veniexia"). Vendrame declared that he revealed the plot to Lion in order that he might take steps to frustrate so great an evil. Lion, on hearing this, was struck dumb with terror, but presently both set out for the palace and laid the whole story before the doge, who, however, appeared to make light of the affair. Lion was not satisfied, and urged the summoning of the Council, to which the doge reluctantly agreed. The Council, it seems, were aware of a certain unquiet in the city, and had ordered pre-

cautions to be taken ; but nothing positive was known as yet. While they were still sitting, two members of the Contarini family, Giacomo and his nephew Zuan, arrived at the palace with news that they had discovered a plot among the population of Castello, headed by Filippo Calendario ; this information they had from a friend who had been invited to join the rising, but had declined, and had denounced the conspiracy to the Contarini. The name of this friend the Contarini refused to give, but under pressure from the Council they went back to their house, and presently returned with Marco Negro, a seaman of Castello. Marco, closely examined, deposed that Nicolò Brazzaduro and Marco Muda had invited him to join them in the plot of which Marino Falier, Doge of Venice, was the head (*"choncludendo che Miser Marin Falier, doxie de Venexia, era chapo e guida del dito trattato"*). We must conclude that the Council already had some suspicion of the fact, for apparently they were, contrary to practice, sitting without the doge, who was moving about the palace with a large train of people and nobles and other persons of weight, who did not know how the matter stood (*"chandava per pallazo con gram zente e zentillomeni e altra bona zente che non sapeva el fato chomo stava"*). Night was now closing in rapidly ; the conspirators were waiting for the sound of the bell, but the doge, in the uncertainty of the situation at the palace, gave no order. The Council, however, acted promptly. Calendario and Zuan da Corso were arrested, brought to the palace, and immediately tortured. Corso confessed that Marino Falier was in the plot (*"era in lo trattato"*) ; he also denounced Calendario, who thereupon made a full confession with names. Orders were given to occupy the piazza with armed men.

So rapid had been the action of the Council that, even if the people had intended to rise, which is doubtful, they were forestalled. The tocsin was not rung, and the city remained absolutely quiet through the

night. On becoming convinced of the doge's guilt, the Ducal Council convened the Council of Ten ("a qual consiglio aspetta simile chose"). The Ten at once appointed a Zonta (Giunta) of twenty assessors, chosen from among the more distinguished nobles, and summoned the doge to appear before them. By this time it was early morning, and the dawn of Tuesday, April 16, was just coming in.

Meantime Bertuccio Ixarello had been arrested and brought to the palace by the people of Santa Croce—a significant fact, enabling us to estimate the slight extent to which the populace of Venice was in favour of the plot. Calendario and Ixarello were at once condemned, and hung with gags in their mouths from the red columns on the upper loggia of the old palace looking on to the piazzetta.<sup>1</sup> The other arcades proceeding from the red columns towards the molo were soon filled with other corpses as execution succeeded execution—eleven in all.

On Friday, April 17, five of the ducal councillors (Giovanni Sanudo being ill), nine of the Council of Ten (Ser Nicolò Falier withdrawing as a relation of the doge), twenty of the Zonta, and two Avvogadori di Comun (another Ser Nicolò Falier withdrawing as related to the prisoner), met to sentence the doge. The court was therefore composed of thirty-six persons. A commission of four—Giovanni Mocenigo (ducral councillor), Giovanni Marcello (chief of the Ten), Luca da Lezze (inquisitor of the Ten), and Orio Pasqualigo, (Avvogador)—had already examined the doge, whether with torture or not is uncertain, though a chronicle of the fifteenth century relates that when Falier was conducted to "the place of torture" a paper fell from his person which revealed the whole plot ("li cazete zerta scrittura per la qual lettera intexe tutto").<sup>2</sup> Trevisan, however, who was one of the Ten, but not of

<sup>1</sup> This loggia disappeared when the old palace was pulled down in 1424. See Lazzarini, *op. cit.* p. 102, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Museo Civico*, cod. 443.



the examining commission, is silent on this point. We have no first-hand account of what took place at the examination; but Matteo Villani, who seems to have been in possession of trustworthy information—though his account varies from that of Trevisan—makes use of the significant phrase, “The doge could not deny the charge” (“Il doge nol seppe negare”). In any case, the examining judges brought up their report, which was discussed by the full court of thirty-six. The formal question was then put: “After what has been said and read, shall we proceed against Marino Falier, doge, for treason to the State and Commune of Venice?” The answer was in the affirmative. Then about the hour of Vespers sentence was moved in the following terms—that Marino Falier should be beheaded on the landing-place of the stone staircase, where he had taken his coronation oath and received the ducal bonnet. Confiscation of the doge’s property was implied in this sentence; but *ob ducatus reverentiam* he was permitted to devise the large sum of two thousand lire *de’ grossi*, equivalent to twenty thousand ducats, and by his will, drawn up for him by the notary Piero de Compostelli<sup>1</sup> in the afternoon of April 17, Falier bequeathed the whole of that sum to his wife and named her sole executrix—a fact in itself sufficient to dissipate the legend of the dogaressa’s light living. The sentence was communicated to the doge in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, and the ducal bonnet was removed from his head; he was led down the stairs amidst a hostile throng, and, as the sun was setting, at the top of the marble stairs which descended into the courtyard, his head fell to the executioner’s sword. Sanudo<sup>2</sup> tells us that he remembers to have seen a white damask altar-cloth, used on Good Fridays, all stained with blood, said to have been placed under the doge when his head was cut off (“cussi ozi intessi”). The doors of the palace had been closed, and when the execution was

<sup>1</sup> *Bollettino araldico*, No. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See *Diarii*, xxviii. 246.



over either the executioner, or, according to another version, a chief of the Ten, went to the loggia overlooking the piazza, and, showing the bloody sword to the crowd, cried, "Look, all of you; supreme justice has been done on the traitor." The doge's body, with his head at his feet, was wrapped in a matting, and lay for some time in the chamber of the Piovego for all to see. Then the corpse was placed in a common barchetta from the traghetto, with four torches, one priest and an acolyte, and conveyed to the family vault at San Giovanni e Paolo.<sup>1</sup>

The Falier tomb was a large oblong sarcophagus of Istrian stone; it had an inscription and the Falier coat-of-arms on it, and stood in an angle of the vestibule of the chapel dedicated to the Madonna della Pace. It was opened in 1812, and was found to be full of skeletons. These were removed one by one, and when nearly all had been taken out, the searchers came on one which had its skull between its feet; it was instantly recognised as the skeleton of the luckless doge.<sup>2</sup> What became of these interesting remains we do not know. The great sarcophagus was, for a long time, used as a cistern in the dispensary of the Town Hospital; it is now the outer loggia of the Museo Civico, though both inscription and arms have been obliterated.

It was only after eleven years had elapsed from the date of the conspiracy and execution of the doge that the Council of Ten, on December 10, 1366, decreed<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmli. fol. 50 v°. : "E fu messo el suo corpo in una barchetta da trageto con iiii. dopieri e uno prete e uno zago e fo portato a sepelir a San Zuane pollo."

<sup>2</sup> Lazzarini, *op. cit.* pp. 191, 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. di Stato*, Cons. x. Misti, reg. 6, fol. 47. The decree runs thus: "1366 die xvi. mensis decembris. Capta. Quod figura Ser Marini Faletro posita in Sala nova Majoris Consilij amoveatur in totum et remaneat locus vacuus in colore *azuro* et in campo scribantur litere albe, *Hic fuit locus Ser Marini Faletro decapitati pro crimine prodicionis*, dimittendo armam suam . . . 9." An amendment was moved by Pietro Zane and Andrea in these terms: "Quod

the removal of Falier's portrait from the series which formed the frieze to the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, and that the vacant space should be painted blue, with the following inscription in white: "Hic fuit locus Ser Marini Faletro decapitati pro crimine prodicionis." This first inscription gives a definition of the doge's crime—namely, treason. When after the fire of 1577 the portraits of the doges were renewed, in Falier's space a black curtain was painted bearing these words in white, as we now see it: "Hic est locus Marini Faletro decapitati pro criminibus." This second inscription leaves the crimes undefined.

After the decapitation of the doge, other trials, executions, confiscations, and sentences of banishment followed in rapid succession, though it does not appear that the Ten were excessively harsh, for a large number of minor accomplices were pardoned.<sup>1</sup> Vigorous measures secured the peace of the city, which does not seem at any moment to have been seriously menaced. Trustworthy men were brought up from Chioggia, and the nobles were required to attend armed day and night for the protection of the piazza and the palace. But these precautions lasted barely two months, and all extraordinary measures were revoked by an order of the Ten on June 10<sup>2</sup>: "Cum per gratiam Dei terra nostra reducta sit in statu quietis et pacis, vadit pars quod custodie ordinate de novo cessent, nec amplius fiant." April 10, the feast of Sant' Isidore, was appointed as a day of solemn thanksgiving and procession round the Piazza di San Marco, attended with the same ceremony as was observed on the feast of St. Vitus which

figura Ser Marini Faletro picta in Sala nova Majoris Consilij reducatur in hunc modum: videlicet quod caput pendeat recisum ad colum, et scribatur quod *fuit decapitatus ob crimine prodicionis* . . . 7; neutral, o; noes, o." The original motion was carried. See Lorenzi, *Monumenti per servire alla Storia del Palazzo Ducale* (Venezia, Visentini: 1868), p. 38.

<sup>1</sup> Lazzarini, *op. cit.* p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. di Stato*, Cons. x. Misti, reg. 5, fol. 34 v°.

commemorated the failure of the Tiepoline conspiracy in 1310.

Such were the facts of the conspiracy of Marino Falier, according to the earliest and most trustworthy authorities; but the causes of the conspiracy and the real intention of the doge have always been, and still remain, a matter of conjecture. It is certain that Falier's action was a surprise and a puzzle to his friends, his contemporaries, and those nearest to his time. Petrarch, writing from Milan only seven days after Falier's execution, admits that the doge's conduct convinced him that he had been mistaken as to Falier's character, that the doge proved to have possessed more courage than prudence, and had enjoyed for many years an unmerited reputation for sound sense. Lorenzo de Monacis is even more outspoken in his amazement. "Stupor est," he says, "quod vir plenus dierum reputatus tantae gravitatis ita crudelis fuerit quod excogitaverit tantum scelus." It is clear that both Petrarch and de Monacis—acute intelligences, trained politicians—felt a difficulty in explaining the event and in defining the motive and aims of the doge.

The official statements which immediately followed the execution positively assert the doge's "treason," but do not state the nature of that treason. On April 17—that is, the day of the doge's death—the government wrote to Lorenzo Celsi, *Podestà* of Treviso, that certain persons, "diabolico spiritu instigatos," had planned the "subversionem status civitatis nostre," but add that "it has pleased God to give into our hands 'omnes principales et auctores prodicionis predictae,' and we have already beheaded Marino Faletro, lately Doge of Venice, 'qui fuit auctor et caput prodicionis predictae.'"<sup>1</sup> On April 19, two days after the doge's execution, the Great Council, when deliberating on the election of a new doge, declare that "vacante ducatu per obitum domini

<sup>1</sup> Verci, *Storia della Marca Trevigiana*, vol. xiii. Documents, p. 31.



Marini Faledro olim ducis Venetiarum decapitati propter prodicionem per eum ordinatam in consumptionem et destructionem civitatis Venetiarum et populi ejusdem." Here the doge is accused of a treason not only against the state of Venice, but against the people of Venice, though the nature of the plot is not revealed. Again, on January 13, 1355-6, the Council of Ten speak of the "proditio attentata per Ser Marinum Faledro." The contemporary Chronicle of Trevisan is not more explicit as to the doge's aims. "Voiendo," he says, "tuti i prediti redur Veniexia aruina e pessimo stato." The anonymous chronicler of 1396<sup>1</sup> is the first to define the doge's object: "Questo doxe insperado da spiriti diabolici con alcuni homeni suo seguaci provolari volse tradir Veniexia e farse signor dessa"; and farther on: "E poi dovea levar el dito doxe signor a bacheta e mantegnir el rizimento de Veniexia a puovollo e robar tute le chaxe dei zentilomeni et alzider tuti quelli li fosse contrarii e vergognare tute le sue done." Here we get the statement that the doge, with the help of some of the populace, intended to make himself lord of Venice, the bribe held out to his followers being the sacking of the nobles' houses, the ravishing of their women-folk, and the usual promise, put forward by all Italians aspiring to a despotism, that the government should be carried on on lines favourable to the people ("mantegnir el rizimento de Veniexia a puovollo"). Lorenzo de Monacis supports this view, though in more measured terms: "Dux immemor ingentium patriæ beneficiorum, et magnitudine honorum elatus . . . truci ambitione vexatus, excogitavit auxilio aliquorum civium popularium subvertere statum civitatis et extincta nobilitate dignitatem antiqui et perpetui ducatus nova et violenta permutare tyrannide." Here the doge's personal ambition is adduced as the main factor in the plot; and later on, when relating the insult to the

<sup>1</sup> *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. mmli.



doge, Lorenzo declares that "*satis patet quod dux non habuit causam sed quæsit occasionem male agendi*"—that Steno's insult, in fact, was not the cause but the pretext for the plot which was already ripening in the doge's ambitious mind. Finally, Antonio Morosini says that the doge "*manda per alguny povolany homeny de mar e de altra chativa chondicion persone, atratando voler la citade de Veniexia in so dominio per muodo de tirania.*" That is a distinct statement that Falier was aiming at a tyranny. The official statements and the opinion of the nearest authorities, therefore, all agree in explaining the plot as an attempt on the part of Falier to make himself sovereign in Venice by the help of the people and the seafaring and merchant classes. We must, however, bear in mind that, in spite of this consensus of opinion, we are listening to one party only—the aristocratic and official side of the case—the statement of those who condemned the doge or were in the service of the government that executed him; we have never heard the doge's side of the case, the minutes of his examination before the Commission of the Ten being unfortunately lost. It is true, nevertheless, that his friend Petrarch has nothing to urge in Falier's defence. "*Nemo illum excusat; ita populum absolvo*"; but then, failure is seldom excused.

Various conjectural explanations of the exact aim of the plot have been advanced; each of them, however, presents some difficulties. It has been suggested that the key to the conspiracy was a coalition between the doge, smarting under Steno's insult, and the people, exasperated by the insolence of the governing caste; and that the object of the plot was to crush the nobility and to return to the earlier constitution of Venice, in which the doge and people were in immediate contact. But the action of the populace during the crisis of the plot seems to negative such a conclusion. The people did not rise, the city remained remarkably quiet, the movement was confined to the

quarter of Castello and to the arsenal hands,<sup>1</sup> on whom the doge chiefly relied; some of the conspirators were even arrested and brought to the palace by the people of Santa Croce.

Again, the conspiracy has been represented as following the lines of the Tiepolo rising, as a revolt against the operation of the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio*, which disfranchised so many families. But there is no evidence in the documents to support this view, and we find no noble names among those of the conspirators.

There remains the third and most plausible explanation—that the doge intended, with the help of the lower populace, to make himself despot or lord of Venice. This view has the nearly unanimous support of all who lived about the time of the conspiracy. The idea was in the air of Italy. The doge had seen the Visconti, the Scalas, the Carraresi, raising themselves to absolute power in their native cities. The idea was also in the air of Venice. A proposal had been made to other nobles, Piero Badoer and Piero Guistinian, for example, that they should follow the spirit of the times and by a bold stroke create a dynasty in place of the oligarchy. The danger from the dynastic idea

<sup>1</sup> The arsenal hands were especially entrusted with service at the palace. They formed, indeed, a sort of bodyguard to the doge, and down to the close of the Republic it was they who cleared the piazza when the newly elected doge made his procession in the *pozzetto* (see Canal and Brustolon's engravings). By the early constitution of the Republic the crafts were bound to render certain services of their trade to the doge and to work in the courtyard of the palace. But not all the members of a trade were required for palace service; hence arose the distinction between the *artigiano curtense* and the *artigiano libero*. The *artigiani curtensi* became a kind of train-band at the disposal of the doge, and Falier may have been relying in part at least on their support. This was a power which the aristocracy, in its determination to prevent a doge from ever becoming lord of Venice, was resolved to curtail; and we find the rights of the doge over the *artigiani curtensi* being gradually restricted in successive *promissioni* (see Monticolo, *I capitolari delle arti Veneziane*, vol. ii. Preface [Roma, Istit. Storico: 1905]).

was ever present to the minds of the governing caste, and led them to curtail the ducal power with each successive coronation oath. But even this explanation is not free of objections. There is the difficulty of accounting for the attitude and action of the doge himself. In the whole course of Falier's career there is not the smallest indication of such an idea having entered his head up to the date of his election as doge. He did not seek election; he did not even know that the ducal throne was vacant; "*ducatus honor non petenti; imo quidem ignaro sibi obtigit*," says Petrarch truly. And yet election to the dogeship must have been essential to the success of such a scheme, had he ever entertained the idea. On the other hand, the governing caste can have had no suspicion of Falier when they elected him doge; they would never have filled the chief place in the state by a man suspected of intending to overthrow their own domination. Furthermore, Falier was childless and with few relations—a fact which militates against the supposition that he contemplated founding a dynasty, though it is true he was deeply attached to his nephew Fantino, and may have dreamt of him as a successor on the throne. In any case, we may feel pretty sure that Falier, when he came to the throne, had no intention of upsetting the Venetian constitution. How are we to explain the rapid growth of so rash a design in the brain of an old man, famed for prudence, with a past illustrious for brilliant and faithful service to the state? Steno's insult is altogether too trivial an episode to account satisfactorily for so violent a change of attitude. At the end of the matter we are forced to Petrarch's conclusion. "I pity," he says, "and at the same time I am wrath with that unhappy man, who, raised to the highest honour, sought heaven knows what at the very close of his days. His misfortune is all the greater in that the judgment passed upon him would show him to have been not merely luckless, but demented and insane."

"Causas vero . . . si comperte loqui velim, nequeo, tam ambiguæ et variæ referentur."

Whatever the causes may have been, the result of Falier's conspiracy is clear. As the rising of Tiepolo created the Council of Ten, that powerful weapon of the governing caste, so the execution of the doge demonstrated and confirmed the supremacy of the Ten. The rapidity and efficiency of its action<sup>1</sup> in the face of a grave menace to the new aristocracy, the party whose creature it was, justified its existence. If there had ever been any doubt in men's minds as to whether this potent engine were to remain a permanent part of the Constitution, the conspiracy of Marino Falier dissipated such doubts for ever, and finally established the Council of Ten as the very core of the Venetian oligarchy.

<sup>1</sup> The government acknowledged that the Ten had acted "*absque aliquo strepitu vel turbatione civium.*"



## The Carraresi

Si trova sulla terra delle catastrofi.—FERRARI.

ITALY, it has often been said, is not the country of chivalrous romance. In nothing is the truth of the observation more clearly shown than in the history of her great families. There is no lack of adventure, and often an excess of strange, bizarre, startling incidents calling forth shrewdness, resource, courage; but the aroma of romance is not there, the peculiar charm of chivalry is wanting; there is no mystery. Italian character is true to Italian landscape, "the little blue-hilled, pastoral, sceptical landscape," perfect in form, delicious and delicate in colour, but grand or mysterious seldom. Italy never felt the full force of the feudal system; and people of northern temperament miss that sympathetic thrill that even now runs through us as we read of actions gentle, loyal, knightly, or true. No doubt much of the charm of our family history is due to its vague outline. We look at the deeds of our forefathers through the obscurity of barbarous ages. The lines grow mellowed and softened, toned to fit subjects for a ballad; the traditions of family history live as sacred legends, of deep interest to the family, but still legends, myths robbed of the cold clearness of an historical outline. In Italy family story emerges only to become at once an integral portion of the country's history, to pass directly into the cold light, to be immediately tested by the critical standards of historical accuracy; it has from the moment of its birth that clearness and crudeness which belong to fact. The early deeds of the Visconti, the Scala family, or the Carraresi live not

in ballads but in chronicles, our main fountain-heads for picturesque Italian history generally. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that these chronicles are devoid of interest or of fascination. They have, after all, many of the qualities of the ballad; they make their pictures, they touch the human passion with that simplicity which is consummate art, and, almost in spite of the deeds they relate, there is a tenderness about them. No one can read the Perugian chronicle of Matarazzo,<sup>1</sup> or the Paduan history of the Gattari, without feeling that they have a charm and romance of their own—not the clannish romance of feudalism, steeped in mystery and weirdness, but the charm of highly developed individualities in play with other characters their like. The men of these chronicles are beautiful as finished products of civilization; but we can never think of them as

Beauty making beautiful old rhyme.

The family of Carrara, with whose intricate growth and tragical end we have now to deal, lived in the very heart of that curious period of Italian history when the Signori rose to the height of their illegal power. The Carraresi grew up side by side with the Visconti, the Gonzaghi, the Estensi, the Polentani, the Rossi, the Scaligeri, and with the last of these they fell. Venice alone among all these princelings pursued a steady policy. In common with her neighbours she had passed through the crisis of the Signori, those pangs which issued in the birth of a despot for nearly every Italian town. But with her the revolution took a complexion peculiar to herself. When the ferment of the Tiepoline conspiracy subsided, Venice found herself not under the rule of a single tyrant, an individual who might be assassinated and who was doomed, sooner or later, to extinction with his whole race, but with the permanent, unassailable Ten as her lord. She was a republic only in name; the Ten was

<sup>1</sup> See the essay "Perugia" in Mr. Symonds's *Sketches in Greece and Italy*.

her despot, without the dangers of a despot's throne. Venice was secure ; freed from the fatal need for incessant and feverish action, that curse on all the other Signori, she could bide her time and choose her moment to strike. That moment was never chosen wantonly, but always with a distinct and reasoned view to her own requirements. The Venetian Republic was the one stable element in all North Italy.

It was an age of exciting change, of deep and riveting interest, and the Carraresi were typical of their period, not only in their politics and in the vicissitudes of their fortune, but in their private life as well. The men of those days were "born to strange sights" ; they sought them, courted them, delighted in them : nothing could be too strange or bizarre for that insatiable thirst for novelty with which they burned. They rung the joy out of violent changes and contrasts. All they touched was embraced with ardour, from a headlong debauch to a religious revival. At one moment these men were tearing along in a mad orgy, at the next they were covered with sackcloth and ashes, marching in the rear of the Bianchi procession,<sup>1</sup> joining fervidly in the cry, "Repent! repent!" swelling the chorus of "Stabat Mater." Few were greater proficient in the invention of new arts, for public as for private life, than the Visconti. But nothing could save these men from the doom they dreaded ; they were condemned to plagiarism, to repetition and sameness. Each draught of pleasure or of power only intensified the thirst that mocked their impotence to satisfy it. The forty days' tortures of Galeazzo Visconti were repeated by Francesco Carrara at Bassano ;<sup>2</sup> but the master had at the same

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicon Patavinum*, ap. Muratori, *Antiquit. Ital. Med. Æv.* tom. iv. ad ann. 1399 (Milano : 1741).

<sup>2</sup> Azzari, *Storia di Milano*, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Script.* tom. xvi. ; Galeazzo Gattaro, *Istoria Padovana*, ap. Murat. *RR. II. SS.* tom. xvii. ; Verci, *Storia della Marca Trivigiana* (Venezia : 1789), bk. xvi. ad ann. 1373.



moment created and exhausted the idea. All that human bodies are capable of enduring he had forced them to endure. It was in vain that Carrara cried for a fiftieth day; the limit was reached; he was face to face with the impossible. At another time the operation of diverting all its rivers from an enemy's territory, or its converse of drowning the foe by piercing the banks of a river in flood, was devised. The labour was enormous, but delightful, for there was a new power to contend with, a new opposing element even more incalculable than man, and that was Nature. But the ruse became hackneyed at once, and we grow tired of reading the story of works on the Brenta, the Bachiglione,<sup>1</sup> the Mincio, unrelieved by any variation except that now and then Nature refuses to bow to the whims of a Lombard lord, and, bursting out, sweeps a Scala's or Visconti's dams and embankments to perdition. Again, Can Signorio della Scala resolved to murder his brother—that was common enough; but coming from his mistress, there was the new touch. The plan succeeded, and was soon after adopted by Antonio Scala, who killed his brother Bartholomew on his way home from a rendezvous; and certain of the Carrara family proposed a like fate, under like circumstances, for the head of their house. The idea was run to death in a moment, but the honours remained with the inventor; Can Signorio alone put the finishing touch to his work by accusing his brother's mistress of the murder and torturing her till she died. The number of family murders was enormous. In seven generations of the Scala house we can count nine such treacherous deaths, an allowance of one and two-sevenths of a murder to each generation, and that inside their own walls.<sup>2</sup> The heads of houses had this fate constantly before their eyes, and yet they never seemed to have expected it

<sup>1</sup> See Gattari, *op. cit.* ad ann. 1387, and *passim*; Verci, *op. cit.* bk. xv. ad ann. 1368.

<sup>2</sup> See Litta, *Famiglie Celebri d'Italia*, in voce *Scaligeri*.



to overtake themselves; so Bernabò Visconti, when his nephew arrested him, cried, "O Gian Galeazzo non esser traditor del tuo sangue"; but he might have known from his own experience the value of such an appeal.

These men were indeed "born to strange sights"; perhaps to no stranger one than the mixture of chivalry and treachery in the story of so many noble houses. Francesco Carrara the elder was dubbed by Charles IV. on the field; and no doubt he deserved it, for he was a brave soldier: but he immediately conferred a like honour on a number of Paduan gentlemen; among them, on one Zanibon Dotto, who at that very moment had the poisons in his pocket to administer to Francesco, and money for doing so from Jacopino, Francesco's uncle.<sup>1</sup> We cannot help feeling that these men looked upon life as a game to be made as intricate as possible for the pleasure of playing it. Anything which added a new colour to life or imposed a new condition on the game was at once adopted; and so we find knighthood and treachery side by side, accepted as facts and elements to be manipulated. Anything, on the other hand, which, like moral considerations, interfered with the development of the game, or crossed the path to the end in view, must be left aside—"Si violandum est jus regnandi gratia, violandum est"; if virtue "like not the play, why then she likes it not, perdy." All things were pardoned to the man who played the game successfully. Here it was not a soft but a witty answer which turned away wrath. Ubertino Carrara invented a grim amusement for himself, to while away the time till he should succeed to the Signory. He and his companions used to roam about Padua at night; if they met a citizen or a merchant going home, a bag was

<sup>1</sup> Cortusiorum, *Historia*, ap. Mur. *RR. II. SS.* tom. xii. ad ann. 1354; Gattari, *op. cit.*; Verci, *op. cit.* ad ann.; Cittadella, *Storia della Dominazione Carrarese in Padova* (Padova: 1842), vol. i. cap. xxiv.

slipped over the unfortunate man's head, and he was dragged about, up and down the streets, until he lost all sense of where he might be; he was then taken to some house, where the band mystified, bullied, and frightened him, sometimes to death and always until he had paid a large sum to his tormentors. One day Ubertino caught a Florentine. The man was treated in the usual way. When the bag was taken from his head, Lappo—that was his name—asked where he was. "In Trebizond," was the answer. "A good wind and a fair passage, gentlemen!" The company relished the wit of this reply, and they allowed Lappo to go scot-free.<sup>1</sup>

It is not a pleasant picture; but as these men treated life like a problem in chess, so their lives have the interest of a problem for us. If we referred to the pages indexed as *ejus mores* in Muratori's vast storehouse, we should find much that is terrible and revolting, while making a large allowance for the exaggeration which not improbably exists; but we should also find an infinite variety of strongly developed characters, each one defining itself clearly before us; and this individuality seems to be the real point of interest in that curious age. They were people full of passion, which they obeyed unhesitatingly—"Quando viene il desiderio non c'è mai troppo," said a modern Italian; and so these elder Italians felt and acted. But they paid dearly for this loyal obedience to desire. They did not perceive that this was not true liberty, that it landed them in a *cul-de-sac*. The attainable was exhausted and grew insipid, the unattainable alone had any attraction for them, and so they were condemned to an endless heaven of hope and hell of realization.

As in private so it was in public life. Politics was a game which no one wished to see ended. Wars were dragged on to an interminable length without

<sup>1</sup> Vergerius, *Vitæ Carrariensium*, in vit. *Marsilii*, ap. Murat. *RR. II. SS.* tom. xii.

one decisive blow, because, of the men who conducted them, no two were pursuing exactly the same object. Treaties public and secret crossed and recrossed each other, covering the face of Italy with an intricate web. Each new ruse of politics became irresistibly infectious: only those at whose destruction it was aimed felt any alarm; the rest stood by to see and learn how the move was played. We might almost draw up a code of political maxims from the complicated history of the time. A treaty or a peace was not used to terminate disputes or to bind allies together; they had definite and special uses other than these. Treaty faith was unknown, and leagues were formed for this purpose—that they enabled a prince, in times of pressure, to buy better terms for himself by selling his allies. He either weakened the league by withdrawing, or he turned his arms absolutely against his former allies; for the latter service the pay would be higher. A peace might be concluded for ten years or a hundred, though it was intended to observe it just four months. Its real value was to gain breathing time and to allow the universal bad faith to explode a powerful and hostile combination. Another maxim, and one which Bernabò Visconti was never tired of applying, was—"Attack others before they attack you. Choose a weak moment in your neighbour, and strike; if not, he will infallibly turn on you in your hour of distress." The fatal necessity to extend in order to prevent others from extending proved the ruin of the Signori. Having once entered on the path of lordship, only one course lay open to them: headlong they must go or be lost; and if they went on they were equally doomed to destruction, but in pressing forward lay their only hope of postponing the day of their ruin. Under such imperative compulsion to restlessness and aggression, quiet in the neighbourhood of an Italian prince was absolutely unknown and unenjoyed. The Signori were to the manner born, it was one of the conditions of their



life; but for the people this feverish atmosphere proved an endless source of agony and torment. Again, experience soon taught these politicians that to bend was not to break. Suppleness was a quality they highly prized. Scala and Visconti bowed before the whirlwind of John of Bohemia's popularity, but they rose again behind him like reeds. Francesco Carrara gave way before Venice and saved himself for a time; his son Novello refused to do so and was lost. Venice herself yielded to Hungary, and surrendered Dalmatia to avoid worse loss; but she never intended to forgo that province for ever. The constant kaleidoscopic changes in Italian politics always gave a hope that what was lost to-day might be regained to-morrow. There was, however, a refinement on this maxim of momentary cession under pressure. It became by no means unusual for a prince to yield, not to the enemy who was harassing him, but to some third party. By this means he mortified his foe, he shifted the burden of the war to other shoulders, and might fairly look to recovering what he had lost some later day. Venice, when in the agony of the Chioggian war, handed Treviso to the Duke of Austria; she thereby stole it from Carrara, who must inevitably have captured it, and at the same time she entailed on him a war with Austria which materially crippled his power.

Under the Signori the townsfolk suffered terribly. The government of the despots was the very incarnation of a sole and selfish monarchy. All the resources, all the machinery of the state, were in their hands, to be used for their own individual ends. Milanese interests, Veronese interests, Paduan interests had no existence; the salvation of a Visconti, a Scala, or Carrara were the only purposes to which the lives and wealth of all these unhappy citizens were dedicated. It is true that, in the intervals of self-protection or extension, Can Signorio might order his tomb, and the other Scaligeri build up immortal monuments;



Gian Galeazzo might design and dedicate the Certosa at Pavia, or Francesco Carrara endow the university of Padua and foster the wool trade ; but what could that do for people exposed to twenty years' unceasing war and in daily danger of pillage ? Venice alone, with singular wisdom, identified herself with her subjects ; she did not exist apart from them ; all her power was ready at any moment to protect her merchants in England, in Italy, or the East. Venetian interests did exist ; and for that reason we cannot wonder at the joy with which the lion of San Marco was hailed as, one by one, Treviso, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua passed under the dominion of the Serene Republic. Partly debauched, partly terrorized, the spirit of the towns was crushed out of them, and they suffered in silence. They passed from one master to another, each in turn glutting his avarice or his cruelty with their wretched bodies. Feltre, Belluno, Bassano, changed hands, were thrown from the Scala to Hungary, from the Hungarians to Carrara, to Austria, to the Visconti, resting only and at last under the wise rule of Venice. The Signori made a point of holding as many towns as possible—not for the glory or the strength they gave, but because they passed current as banknotes, or could be sold for 50,000, 70,000, 100,000 ducats, or even, as in the case of Verona, for as much as 440,000 florins, and therefore could be used to buy off a foe or to purchase an ally. It was vain for the people to cry with the citizens of Bologna, "*Noi non vogliamo esser venduti.*" They were sold whether they wished it or not.

Looking at their history as a whole, we feel that these Signori were men of singular force and power ; capable of all things, of splendid action, no doubt, as well as of that which they really achieved, ruinous failure. But the spirit which filled them and drove them was a fatal one ; it compelled them to the destruction of themselves and the annihilation of their country. Their story is a tragedy.

It was among men like this and in such times that the family of Carrara, nobles of Padua, emerged and made themselves famous. Almost the first we hear of them was a disastrous episode; and a Thyestean destiny dogged their steps unto the end. Padua had always been strongly Guelf in sympathy; the Carraresi were by birth and gifts partisans of the emperor, with imperial diplomas and privileges dating back as far as the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> They settled in a village about seven miles south of Padua, said to have been famous for its wainwrights, and therefore called Carrara, but now Villa del Bosco. The monstrous excesses of Ezzelino da Romano threw the Carraresi into the arms of the people, and it was owing to this change of politics that they subsequently became lords of Padua; but at first it cost them dear. In A.D. 1240 the head of the house was besieged by Ezzelino in his castle of Agna. The tyrant pressed the siege so vigorously that surrender became inevitable. Jacopo Carrara determined to save as much of his inheritance as he could. The castle stood in the middle of a small lake. A boat was made ready under the walls, and one night all the ladies of the house, the jewels, the gold, and the title-deeds were put on board and the boat pushed off. But they had been anxious to save too much, and so lost all; for before the boat had got half-way across the lake, it capsized, and everybody and everything went down. The place afterwards bore the name of the Lago delle Donne.<sup>2</sup>

Not only the Carraresi, but Padua also suffered for her Guelfish sympathies. In the year 1312 Can Grande della Scala, as imperial vicar, took Vicenza from the Paduans, and the next six years were spent in fruitless efforts on the part of Padua to recover the city. In

<sup>1</sup> Cittadella, *op. cit.* vol. i. cap. vii.; Litta, in voce *Carraresi*. The family was probably Lombard, to judge by the early names we find, as Gumbert and Litolf. See Vergerius, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Vergerius, *op. cit.*

one of the many assaults on Vicenza, Jacopo Carrara<sup>1</sup> and his nephew Marsiglio were taken prisoners and carried to Verona. There they ingratiated themselves with the Scala family, and eventually effected a peace between Verona and Padua. The Paduans hailed Jacopo, on his return, as the saviour of his country; and in gratitude for the peace, and to put an end to the agony of the town, which was being devoured by the rapacity of the usurers, the Ronchi and Alticlini<sup>2</sup>—of whom the chronicler remarks, “In iis voluptas peccandi erat summa”—they chose him captain of the people (1318). The relations between Padua and Verona seemed amicably arranged, and at one of the last diplomatic interviews which Jacopo held with Can Grande an amusing incident occurred. Carrara and Scala were walking in a garden under the walls of Padua; they came to a door too narrow to allow them to pass through arm in arm; neither would take the precedence, and the grave matters under discussion seemed likely to be indefinitely postponed, when a court jester solved the difficulty by crying, “Let the biggest fool go first”; instantly both leaped forward to claim that honour, and the obstructing door was cleared.

Jacopo died and left the lordship to his nephew

<sup>1</sup> Jacopo seems to have been a man of violent temper. In this assault he was wounded in the leg before surrendering. He asked his captor to take off his greaves; in doing so the man hurt him, and received a smart box on the ear to teach him gentleness. At another time he was hearing causes in Padua. An importunate suitor annoyed him by his persistence; Jacopo leaned down and whispered in the man's ear, “I'll cut your tongue out.” The brutality of the threat and its probable execution had the desired effect. See Vergerius, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> The three young Alticlini and the two Ronchi seem to have tortured Padua to their hearts' content. The account of their dungeons and prisons, if true, is horrible, and their misdeeds are thus summed up: “Furta, fraudes, adulteria, stupra quæ apud alios gravia videri solent nihili apud eos æstimabantur. Cædes non nisi per summam crudelitatem placebant, rapinæ non nisi per summam crudelitatem extortæ”—Vergerius, *op. cit.*



Marsiglio, a man of ready resource and deep cunning—"simulare et dissimulare facile doctus."<sup>1</sup> But all his powers could not stop the approach of Can Grande, who had resolved to possess Padua as well as Vicenza. Marsiglio was pressed from without and threatened from within by members of his own family; Nicolò Carrara was jealous of him, and was making a bid for the support of Verona. In the year 1328 Marsiglio found himself compelled to give his cousin Taddea in marriage to Mastino, nephew and heir to Can Grande, and with her the city of Padua for a dowry. Scala became lord of Padua, and Marsiglio received it back from him as his governor. From that moment Marsiglio conceived a violent hatred for the whole house of Scala; but he had to bide the time for his revenge. Next year death carried off Can Grande at Treviso; he died, and left his vast principedom and his vaster designs to his nephew Mastino. Marsiglio saw his opportunity and set to work; he inflamed the mind of Scala against Venice—the one power able to check the growing power of the Scaligers; he urged Mastino to defy and crush the Republic. Differences, chiefly on the subject of the salt-pans,<sup>2</sup> were fostered and fomented; and Marsiglio, blindly trusted by Scala, accepted an embassy to Venice with full powers to arrange the difficulties. He used his full powers to arrange matters after his own mind. One day he sat at dinner next the doge; and as the story goes, he said, "I wish to speak to you." The doge dropped his napkin; both stooped to pick it up. Marsiglio whispered, "What reward for the man who should give you Padua?" "We should make him Signore," was the reply. When the two heads rose again above the table the terms had been agreed on. Marsiglio was to seize Padua by the

<sup>1</sup> Vergerius, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Romanin, *op. cit.* tom. iii. pp. 118-20; *I Commemoriali* (Venezia: 1878), lib. iii. p. 384, ad ann. 1336; Verci, lib. x., where many documents on the subject may be read.



help of Venice and in her name, and to receive in return the lordship of the city at the hands of the republic. Whether the story is true or not, the meaning and result of the episode appeared in that great league, headed by Venice, against the house of Scala, which for ever put a check to Mastino's ambition, and in two years stripped him of Parma, Lucca, Padua, Treviso, Feltre, Belluno and Brescia; leaving him where his uncle had begun, bare lord of Vicenza and Verona. Out of this struggle, which ended in the year 1338, Treviso, her first solid land possession, fell to Venice, and Padua, Castelbaldo, Cittadella, and Bassano to the prime mover in the league, Marsiglio Carrara.

The story of the events in Padua which preceded the recovery of the Signory by the Carraresi is curious and picturesque. Alberto Scala, brother to Mastino, undertook the charge of Padua, and Ubertino and Marsiglio Carrara, then unsuspected of hostility, were invited to help him in the government. Alberto was a man addicted to pleasure; he had wounded Ubertino in his family honour. Carrara feigned indifference; he laughed,<sup>1</sup> but he put a couple of horns on his crest to keep his wrath warm, and to remind him to exact vengeance some day. Mastino was not without his suspicions of the Carraresi, and these became confirmed after Marsiglio's visit to Venice. He constantly wrote to his brother Alberto, warning him to keep an eye on the two Carraresi. But Alberto liked the complacent husband, and thought the Carraresi amusing companions; so, by way of joke, he showed his brother's letters to Marsiglio, saying, "You see what he would have me do." Carrara feigned to be hurt, and indignantly replied, "Those who tell your brother these stories of me never gave him as much as a coop of hens, but I have given him Padua." Albert thought the reasoning good, and

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Antiquit. Ital. Medii Ævi*. vol. iii. dissert. 36 (Mediol.: 1741).

tried to soothe Marsiglio. Mastino Scala, however, grew daily more alarmed. He sent an imperative order to Alberto to arrest and behead the Carraresi. Alberto did not relish the commission, but his brother was not to be trifled with. He hired several assassins, and, one evening, stationed them near the great door that leads into the court of the Palazzo de' Signori, on the inner side, under the arcade; he then sent for Marsiglio and Ubertino, and he himself waited outside in the moonlight to see the end. It was late, and the brothers were going to bed when the message arrived. They were surprised, and rather suspicious when they heard that Alberto wanted them at such an hour of the night; nevertheless, they obeyed. A horse was brought round, and just as they were, in their night-shirts and caps, they set out, Marsiglio in the saddle and Ubertino on the crupper, holding on behind him. Alberto, from his place under the outer arcade, saw the brothers come trotting into the piazza; his heart smote him and his purpose wavered. The Carraresi came towards him, and in a cheery voice Marsiglio cried, "What the devil do you want with us now? We have only just left you. We are sleepy, and wish to go to bed. What do you want?" Alberto replied, "Oh, I want nothing!" "Well, since we are here we will go in with you," replied Carrara, making for the archway where the assassins lay in ambush. "No, don't go in; don't go in. Go to bed; I want nothing," cried Alberto; and the two brothers, with their worst suspicions confirmed, turned round and rode off to their own house.

A day or two later, Mastino Scala, seriously enraged, sent a further letter, threatening Alberto if his orders were not immediately obeyed. The despatch contained explicit instructions as to the execution of the brothers, and it reached Alberto while he was playing chess; he, without looking at it, passed it to Marsiglio, and went on with his game. When that was finished, he turned to Carrara and said, "Well,

how is Messer Mastino, and what does he say?" "I have not read the letter; it is addressed to you," replied Marsiglio. "Take it and read it," said Alberto. Carrara opened the letter and read the order for his own and his brother's instant execution. "Messer Mastino is very well," says he to Scala, "and wishes to remind you to procure a peregrine falcon for him, if any be on sale here." "A very important affair indeed," laughed Alberto. The danger in which they were placed, however, determined the Carraresi to act at once. Marsiglio stayed with Alberto all that day, while Ubertino went to tell Rossi, the Venetian general, to advance next morning, and he would find a gate open. Alberto was awakened by the uproar in the town. He went out with Marsiglio to the piazza. When he saw the Venetians he cried, "What troops are these?" "These are the troops of Messer Piero Rossi, who is very anxious to see you," says Marsiglio. "Shall I be killed?" asked Alberto. "No. Go back to my room and wait for me." Alberto obeyed; but the result of his waiting was that the Carraresi arrested him, and sent him to Venice, where he endured three years' imprisonment, the ennui of which was not relieved even by the dogs, apes, and buffoons so liberally supplied him by the doge.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Signory came back to the hands of the Carraresi, after a lapse of ten years; but Marsiglio enjoyed the fruit of his labour one year only; he died in 1338. He was followed by Ubertino, and then by five others of the house of Carrara, as lords of Padua. The family was firmly established. They had their share of political fluctuations, and perhaps more than their share of violence and family murders—three in fifteen years, besides many treacheries and conspiracies which proved abortive. Only one feature is particularly noteworthy; that is the dearth of children, and the erratic course the suc-

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*; Muratori, *Antiq. Ital. Med. Ævi.* vol. iii. *loc. cit.*



cession took in consequence. Ubertino was fourth cousin of Marsiglio, and Jacopo third cousin once removed of Marsiglietto, whom he murdered and succeeded.<sup>1</sup> But we cannot linger over details; we must press on to the catastrophe and tragedy of the house in the reign of the last two princes. Only one more story from the life of Ubertino Carrara, and that because it illustrates the touch of almost Caligula-like madness that must have tainted these men.

Ubertino lived, on the whole, in friendly relations with Venice, though not without enemies in the Senate and Great Council. It came to his ears that one Venetian noble in particular was especially bitter against him, and he resolved to revenge himself. Ubertino sent several of his dependents to Venice; the senator was enticed to drink some wine which had been heavily drugged, and fell into a deep swoon. In this state he was carried to Padua, to the palace, and put to bed in Ubertino's own room. When he woke it was some time before he knew where he was; but gradually, through the dim light, he saw, on the heavy hangings of the bed, the hateful *carro*, the shield of the house he had lately attacked so violently. It was all round him, on the pillars, the tapestries, the ceiling. He leapt out of bed in terror, and at that moment Ubertino rushed into the room, crying, "What are you doing here? How came you here? I know you for my foe. You are here to seek my life; but you shall pay for it." The unfortunate Venetian fell on his knees and begged for mercy. Ubertino's mood changed; he burst out laughing, and said, "Very well; I only wanted to give you a lesson." The senator was royally treated that evening, and sent home the next day.<sup>2</sup>

The family went on prospering till we come to Francesco, the seventh prince. Francesco succeeded

<sup>1</sup> See Litta, *op. cit.* in voce *Carraresi*.

<sup>2</sup> Vergerius, *op. cit.* in vit. *Ubertini*.



in joint sovereignty with his uncle Jacopino. But such a division of power never could be acceptable, and almost invariably ended in violence. Jacopino tried to poison his nephew, and Francesco replied by deposing and imprisoning his uncle. In the year 1355 he reigned sole lord of Padua. In his hands the policy of the house of Carrara was altered with fatal results. Hitherto the family had leaned much on Venice, and had maintained friendly relations with her. This was only natural; for Venice had saved the Carraresi from the Scaligeri and had replaced them in power. But the dangerous ambition for extended territory and lordship with which the family had been inoculated from the first now declared itself. Francesco determined to run the race with the Visconti and other Signori. That could only be done by freeing himself from the position of quasi-tutelage to Venice in which he and his family stood. But in adopting this policy he made an irretrievable mistake; he looked for alliance and support in Germany, in Austria, above all, in Hungary—a power far removed from Italy, and with few vital interests in the country. Perhaps no other course was open to him, after once determining his line of action. An alliance with the smaller princes around him, the Estensi, the Gonzaghi, the Polentani, lacked strength, besides being useless on account of the universal bad faith. The Visconti were unscrupulous, greedy, and least of all to be trusted. By union with Venice alone in all Italy could he hope to live, and he had decided against her; for, while she protected, she liked to be obeyed. But it is improbable or even impossible that this could have saved him. He was between two forces—Venice and the Visconti, who were destined to plough their way through or over all the smaller states, to meet at last and struggle for supremacy in northern Italy.

At any rate, Francesco chose his line, and the results of his choice were seen the year after his

accession to sole power (1356). Lewis, the King of Hungary, had long cast a greedy eye on the Venetian province of Dalmatia. He attacked Venice there and also in the Marca Trivigiana. Venice called on Carrara to help her, as his family had often done before ; but she was met by a refusal ; and, more than that, Francesco supplied the Hungarians with food and forage, supporting them where they most needed support, in their commissariat, for they are said to have put in the field an army of forty thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

The conduct of Carrara proved a bitter surprise to Venice, all the more stinging because of the great straits in which the republic then found herself. She had lately been defeated by Genoa at Sapienza ; she had just come through the Falier conspiracy ; money was scarce ; the King of Hungary was before Treviso ; Visconti and Can Grande II. had bought their own immunity by supplying him with troops ;<sup>2</sup> Venice virtually stood alone ; and now Carrara, on whom she relied, had failed her. Her pronounced anger showed itself by the withdrawal of her *podestà* from Padua and the suspension of all commercial relations.<sup>3</sup> This only served to throw Carrara more than ever into the arms of Hungary. Venice could not forget nor forgive this desertion. But the wound was to be made even more piercing. The Hungarian war moved disastrously for Venice ; Dalmatia was occupied and Treviso closely invested. The pope, however, had been watching with alarm the growing power of the Turks, and now insisted that a peace should be effected in Italy to leave room for a crusade against Islam. No crusade was possible without Venice ; and therefore the Hungarian war had to be extinguished. It was Francesco Carrara who was called on to bring this about. If anything could have made

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 199 ; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xiv. ad ann. ; Gattari, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Verci, lib. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> See Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 200.

this peace more unpalatable to Venice, it was the mediation of Carrara, the man she hated more than any other at the moment. By the terms which he procured, Venice lost Dalmatia and was compelled to respect the allies of the King of Hungary; among them, of course, Carrara himself. She could not help herself, and, with her usual good sense, she made the best of the present and awaited the future. So when Carrara came to Venice in 1358, he was well received, and was presented with a palace at San Polo.<sup>1</sup> Thus closed the first rupture between Venice and the Carraresi, peaceably as it appeared, but in the end it proved disastrous for Carrara. Francesco had made an immortal foe.

Francesco himself was deceived by his apparent success; his ambition grew, and he endeavoured to secure an alliance by marriage with the Visconti. Bernabò's wife, Beatrice Scala, called "Regina" for her pride, discountenanced the match, and eventually put an end to the negotiations. This rebuff stung the self-esteem of Carrara, and he was not sorry to show his hatred of the Visconti house soon after by assisting the pope to hold Bologna against Bernabò. But it was a fatal policy; all he gained was a distant and doubtful ally, the pope, while he made an enemy of his near and powerful neighbour. He had, in fact, placed himself in a vice, one iron of which was Venice, the other Visconti. Though he could not see the end, it was all the same inevitable—the total destruction of his family. But if his pride was hurt in one direction, it was soothed in another and his ambition encouraged. For Francesco received the cities of Feltre and Belluno from his good friend, the King of Hungary.<sup>2</sup> This might flatter his vanity, but it proved at best a doubtful gift, for it entailed on him a war with Rudolf of Austria, who claimed these places in

<sup>1</sup> Cittadella, *op. cit.* vol. i. cap. xxvi.; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xiv. Doc. 1572; Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 206, 207; Gattari, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xv.



virtue of his wife, Margaret Maultasch, the heiress of the Tyrol.

For the next nine years, from 1360 to 1369, Carrara lived in a constant state of covert hostility towards Venice, upon the subject of some debatable frontier territory and the right to work salt on the lagoons. But he dared not come to open war, for his hands were tied by fear of the Visconti on the one side, and by his struggles with Rudolf on the other. Matters at last came to a crisis when Francesco built two forts on the Brenta and Bachiglione respectively, and opened a free market at one of them to the considerable damage of Venetian trade, and when he further confirmed the hatred of the republic by tearing up the terminal stones which divided Valsugana from the Trevisan march and planting them some miles nearer Venice. The Republic felt that Carrara had recommenced his old policy of annoying her when she was in difficulties. She had just escaped a serious danger, the loss of Trieste. The Duke of Austria had appeared before the walls to help the rebel city, intending to make the place his own, but he was repulsed and the town subdued. Then Venice turned her attention to Carrara with concentrated fury. Francesco saw the imminent danger and implored all his friends to pacify the Republic. Ambassadors from Hungary, Florence, Pisa, the pope, Siena, and Este flocked to Venice; their numbers and names show the width and strength of Carrara's connections. But in Venetian councils there existed a steady determination to punish the lord of Padua; and the various envoys made little way towards a peaceable settlement. Their presence, however, suspended instant action, and a delay of several months was granted to try the effect of arbitration. Carrara made use of the interval, as the Italian politicians usually did, in the preparation and employment of treachery. In the middle of the lull Venice was startled by some alarming discoveries. Three Venetians, women of the people, unearthed a



plot to murder several of Francesco's most pronounced foes, and the threads of the scheme were traced to Padua. The rumour gained currency that the same hand had poisoned the wells, and it became necessary to appoint a guard to watch them day and night. Lastly, but most disturbing of all, it appeared that Francesco had secret information concerning the councils and intentions of the government, and that from officials of no less rank than two chiefs of the court of appeal and one of the *Avvogadori*.<sup>1</sup> Relations were at once suspended ; war became inevitable, and each party looked to his alliances.

Carrara could count on support from the King of Hungary, who sent the vaivode of Transylvania with a large force into his service. By way of answer Venice tried to obtain the help of the Duke of Austria, but Carrara bought him off with Feltre and Belluno ;<sup>2</sup> only stipulating that he should never sell those towns nor put an Italian in possession. Venice secured Can Signorio Scala in a way even less creditable. Can Grande had deposited with the republic twenty-six thousand ducats for the use of his illegitimate children ; this sum was now handed over to Can Signorio, on condition that he should attack the Padovano. Both parties took the field, but the campaign was disastrous for Venice. The *provveditori*, the government commissioners in the camp,<sup>3</sup> quarrelled, as usual, with the captain-general, who retired in a

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.* ; Daru, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, lib. viii. (Capolago : 1837) ; Vettor Sandi, *Storia Civile della Repub. di Venez.*, par. ii. vol. i. (Venezia : 1755) ; Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 241, 242 ; Marino Sanuto, *Vite de' Duchi*, ad ann. 1369, ap. Murat. *RR. II. SS.* tom. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The Venetian government was represented in the camp of their commander-in-chief by two officers called *provveditori in campo*. Their duties were analogous to those of the Spartan ephors in the field. The general was supposed to consult them, and they kept a watchful eye upon his political relations. They were a necessity created by the mercenary system, and their action was often disastrous.

huff. Taddeo Giustinian, his successor, was utterly routed and made prisoner. In this battle Novello Carrara, twenty-one years old, the eldest son of Francesco, distinguished himself by his bravery.<sup>1</sup> He was mounted on a magnificent war horse, himself clad in armour of shining steel, and over it a white surcoat sown with red *carri*, the cognizance of his house. The defeat of Giustinian caused great alarm in Venice. The Republic hired five thousand Turkish archers and put a new force in the field. The full power of both armies met at Lova, and, thanks to the Turks, the Venetians won a complete victory. Among their prisoners was the vaivode Stephen, nephew to the King of Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

Carrara had tried treachery against Venice; Venice now replied in the same manner. The Republic made terms with Marsiglio Carrara, offering him every support and a large portion of Paduan territory if he would murder Francesco. At the same time certain Paduans also came to Marsiglio at Venice, assuring him that the city would gladly welcome him as lord in place of Francesco. The leader of these was a cleric, one Giacomo Lione, who seems to have borne no very good character, for the chronicler says of him, "Non avendo Dio nè i santi nel mento, ma il Diavolo solo nel corpo." Giacomo "had tasted the sweets of the Church,"<sup>3</sup> and desired more; he demanded the bishopric of Padua as the price of his share in the murder. All the details were carefully arranged; Francesco was to be stabbed when leaving the door of his mistress's house. But two attempts failed—one because a messenger opened a letter and read it; the other, because the would-be bishop, anxious to kill Novello as well as his father, urged a day's delay.<sup>4</sup> Affairs were, however, tending towards a peace. The King of Hungary was anxious to recover his nephew,

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xvi. ad ann. 1373.

<sup>2</sup> Verci, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> "Avendo gustato la dolcezza della chiesa."

<sup>4</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*

the vaivode; Venice also was ready to treat, because she stood in a position to dictate terms. Francesco, alarmed at the prospect of losing his best ally, the Hungarian, found himself compelled to submit; and peace was concluded in the year 1373.<sup>1</sup> Venice intended to cripple Carrara, and to secure, by the severity of the terms she imposed, quiet for some time in that quarter. The war indemnity was heavy—as much as two hundred and ninety thousand ducats; the offending forts and villages on the Brenta were razed and their sites desolated, while, as a scourge for Carrara's pride, the Republic insisted that either Francesco or his son must come in person to Venice, kneel to the doge, confess their fault, and beg forgiveness. Novello, who had a deep affection for his father, would not allow the old man to go. He went himself, and with him Petrarch, the valued friend of the house, who made a long oration in praise of peace. The part played by the great laureate in the political movements of his generation is not the least singular note of that curious, rich, and diversified fourteenth century. This was the poet's last public act, for he died the following year at Arquà, July 18, 1374.

The severity of this defeat sobered Carrara, and for the next few years he remained quiet. Not that Lombardy was quiet; Can Signorio, the last legitimate della Scala, died, and Bernabò Visconti claimed Verona in virtue of his wife Regina. After a long and disastrous war the two Scaligeri, Can Signorio's illegitimate children, were forced to buy off Regina's claim at the price of four hundred and forty thousand florins. But this war had another result more intimately connected with our subject—the league between Scala, Genoa, Hungary, and Carrara, which was destined to bring Francesco once more into collision with Venice. Visconti made overtures to Venice, inviting her to join him in an alliance which should be a reply

<sup>1</sup> See Romanin, *op. cit.* pp. 245, 256; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xvi.



to the Scala league. Bernabò was determined to absorb Genoa as well as Verona, if he saw his opportunity; he now perceived that a war between the two maritime republics was imminent, and, to further his own views, he determined to hold with Venice.

The never-ending question of Eastern trade, so fruitful of quarrels between Genoa and Venice, was always open; but at this moment it presented one of its acuter phases in the difficulties which had arisen as to the possession of Tenedos. War was ostensibly brought about by the rivalry for precedence between the consuls of the two republics, when Pierino Lusignan, King of Cyprus, was being crowned at Famagosta. At the coronation banquet the Genoese so far forgot himself as to throw a loaf at the head of his brother consul, and was expelled from the banquetting-hall.<sup>1</sup> The end of this fracas was the war of Chioggia, a war disastrous not only to the states concerned but to all Europe as well; for, by exhausting Venice and Genoa, it freed the Turk from the control of the two naval powers which alone could have held him in check.<sup>2</sup> This war concerns us now, however, only in so far as it affected the history of the Carrara family. Francesco saw with delight the approaching struggle, for he was eager to shake himself free from the peace of 1373. He joined the Genoese, and at the siege and capture of Chioggia he and his Paduans proved of great help. The town was made over to him, his flag floated from the palazzo, and he added "lord of Chioggia" to his titles. He must have known how bitterly this would sting Venetian pride; but he flattered himself that her days were numbered, that Genoa was about to besiege and sack Venice herself. He indeed, more than any other, urged an attack on the city; and, when the doge petitioned him to receive ambassadors to treat of peace, he replied, "Not before I have bitted the horses

<sup>1</sup> Marino Sanuto, *op. cit.* ad ann. 1378.

<sup>2</sup> See Verzi, *op. cit.*



on Saint Mark's." <sup>1</sup> But in Italy no alliance was long lived. The Genoese admiral was greedy, and quarrelled with Francesco over the booty of Chioggia. Carrara withdrew to the Marca Trivigiana, and there joined the Hungarians, who, at his request, were besieging Treviso. But Francesco's hatred of Venice was a more pressing passion than his ill-humour against Genoa; so when the fortune of war changed, and the Genoese in their turn were shut up in Chioggia, he continued his supply of provisions and war material, until Brondolo fell and Chioggia was cut off from the friendly support of Padua. The siege of Treviso was pressed so vigorously under Carrara's direction, that Venice, rather than see it fall into his hands, made it and the whole of the Marca Trivigiana over to Leopold, Duke of Austria. In fact, Francesco had left no stone unhurled which might wound the Venetians, and it was by no means an adequate retaliation that they thrust him into a war with Austria, over the unhappy city of Treviso.

The peace of Turin (1381) put an end to the Chioggian war. The terms, as far as they concerned Carrara, were based on those of the year 1373. But Austria did not appear among the signatories, and Francesco remained free to urge the siege of Treviso, which was only feebly defended by the duke. The town resisted for three years, alone and unsupported, except by her hatred of the Carraresi. But her bravery availed her nothing. In the year 1384 Leopold, rather than continue his feeble resistance, sold her, with Feltre, Belluno, and Valsugana, to Francesco. This was a large increase to the lordship of Padua. But the inflation brought its inevitable consequence of jealousy on the part of neighbours, and an access, not a diminution, of the thirst for territory. Antonio della Scala had set his heart on Feltre and Belluno;

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.* p. 305; Cittadella, *op. cit.* cap. xxxviii. Others, among them Chinazzo, put these words into the mouth of the Genoese admiral.

he now saw himself robbed of all hope to win them, and became the covert foe of the Carraresi; while Francesco, holding the important Alpine passes commanded by Feltre, Belluno, and Valsugana, ardently coveted the mastery of all the eastern outlets upon Italy. He saw his opportunity when the pope made an unpopular appointment to the patriarchate of Aquileia. The Udinesi refused to accept Philip d'Alençon, the pope's nominee, and Carrara was called on to compel their obedience. He agreed to do so on condition that he should receive Sacile and Monfalcone.<sup>1</sup> If Francesco had succeeded in carrying out this project, his territory would have stretched in a semicircle from Padua, round the head of the Adriatic, to within a very short distance of Trieste. That would have proved a serious menace to Venice, placing commercial routes in the hands of an enemy and virtually confining her to the lagoons. It was obvious that she could not allow anything of the sort to take place.

The Udinesi were secretly encouraged to resist D'Alençon and Carrara; a league of small towns was formed for the purpose, and Venice supplied the funds at the rate of twenty-five thousand ducats a month. The war did not move rapidly, but it spread, as every war inevitably did in those days, when each prince was armed to the teeth and watching his neighbour hour by hour. Venice abstained from openly taking part in the campaign, but she induced Antonio della Scala to attack Francesco. Scala was only too glad to do so, in retaliation for the loss of Feltre and Belluno. No sooner did Scala take the field, than Gian Galeazzo Visconti saw that the moment had come for him to seize Verona, which he claimed through his aunt and mother-in-law, Regina della Scala.

The appearance of Gian Galeazzo on the scene was decisive in the fate of the Carrara family. He was, without exception, the least scrupulous and the most cunning of all the Lombard Signori. He had the

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, vol. iii. p. 318.

largest army and the longest purse. In him all the restless ambition, as well as the deep calculating faculties of his family, were summed up. He was perhaps the most powerful prince in Europe at that moment, and as dangerous to the peace and freedom of Italy as Napoleon subsequently was to the liberty of the Continent. But Visconti never lived to win or lose a Waterloo. Gian Galeazzo resolved to possess not only Verona, but Padua as well; the acquisition of the first, however, was sufficient to employ him at present. He proposed to Carrara an alliance by which they should plunder the Scaligeri; Verona to fall to Gian Galeazzo and Vicenza to Francesco. Carrara should have known how fatal it was to touch a Visconti; the bait, however, proved too tempting, and was swallowed. The joint forces of Milan and Padua entered the Veronese. In battle after battle Antonio della Scala suffered defeat. In vain he sent to Venice imploring aid and urging that it was she who had thrust him into the war.<sup>1</sup> The charge might be true, but the interests of the Republic did not counsel her to move; and she allowed the Scaligers to fall. The battle of Castagnaro decided their fate. Verona was lost by treachery, and Antonio fled to Venice, and thence to Florence. He was poisoned the following year (1388), between Cesena and Forlì. With him ended the house of Scala as lords of Verona, after a reign of one hundred and twenty-seven years. Visconti had taken one step forward; only the Gonzaga and Carraresi now stood between the mistress of the Adriatic and the master of Milan.

Francesco paid dearly for his madness in trusting the faith of the Count of Virtù. Visconti was not slow to take a second step eastward. When Verona fell, Gian Galeazzo's captain occupied Vicenza also, before Carrara had time to seize it. Francesco still hoped,

<sup>1</sup> See Gattari, *op. cit.*; Cittadella, *op. cit.* cap. xlviii.; Romanin, vol. iii. p. 320. "Voi m'avete promesso e ingannato con isperanza d'oviare a questa lega, e hora rimaniamo ingannati."



however, that it would be handed over to him in accordance with the terms of his treaty. But day after day he was put off, and it began to dawn on him that he had been duped and used as a tool by Visconti, who, at that very moment, meditated his ruin. Beside himself, he turned, but too late, to the only power that could help him. He went to Venice to ask her aid. But it was to no purpose that he pointed out how dangerous Visconti might become to the Republic; the Venetians only remembered how dangerous and troublesome Carrara himself had proved. They recalled the poisoned wells, the lordship of Chioggia, the siege of Treviso; they hated him, and he had nothing to offer, while Gian Galeazzo was there promising them Treviso and the Marca back again if they would join him in despoiling Carrara. Venice accepted the league, and the Marquis of Este joined it, bought by the bribe of the Castello d'Este, the original home of his race, which had for long been out of the family.<sup>1</sup>

Francesco Carrara stood on the brink of destruction. He had sown the wind in the war of Chioggia; he now reaped the whirlwind of accumulated Venetian hatred. He found himself alone; his friend the King of Hungary had died six years before, and arrayed against him were the two great powers of North Italy. Nothing could save him; but he made one last effort. He resigned the government into the hands of his son Novello, and himself withdrew to Treviso. He hoped by this act to appease Venice; and Novello wrote to the Republic, urging that they had no quarrel with him and his father no longer reigned.<sup>2</sup> But this time Venice was under no external pressure; her hands were free, and she knew no more satisfactory way of employing them than in chastising the Carraresi. The Milanese and Venetian troops pressed

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, vol. iii. p. 321; Gattari, *op. cit.*; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xx. ad ann. 1388; Cittad. *op. cit.* cap. li.

<sup>2</sup> The traditional reply of Venice is pithy and sums up the situation: "He who is born of a cat can't help having fleas."



towards Novello's capital. After a brave resistance, and chiefly compelled by dissent and faction inside the walls, he yielded Padua and himself to the Count of Virtù. Treviso was occupied by Jacopo dal Verne, the Milanese general, and Francesco, who was captured with the town, reluctantly consented to entrust himself to Visconti, under promise that he should have liberty to go where he chose.<sup>1</sup> He was invited to Cremona. At Verona he found that the safe-conduct was a blank paper in the eyes of the Count of Virtù, and that he was in reality a prisoner under arrest. He never regained his liberty, but, after being moved from one prison to another, each growing more and more rigorous—from Cremona to Como, from Como to San Colombano—he died in 1393 at Monza. He died in misery and actual want, robbed of his last coin by Gian Galeazzo. Then, as so often happened in Italy, as indeed happened a few years later to Novello himself, all honours were lavished on his lifeless body; it was embalmed and sent with great parade to a splendid funeral in Padua. Treviso was handed to Venice; Verona, Vicenza, and Padua remained under the Count of Virtù; and the Carrarese dominion seemed at an end for ever.

Francesco had brought the ruin on himself by his persistent hostility to Venice, and by his greed for territory, which awakened the alarm of the Republic. Out of all the long embroglio which followed the war of Chioggia, the result was this: that two noble houses were destroyed, while Venice and Visconti remained the gainers. But Francesco had spoken a true word to Venice, though her hatred prevented her from attending to it: Gian Galeazzo was a great danger, and Novello Carraro was destined to reap the benefit of the jealousy which inevitably arose between Visconti and the Republic.

The next two years in Novello's life belong to the romance of history. If diversity of fortune were an

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*

object to Carrara and his brother Signori, he must have been well satisfied with the results of these months. By the terms of his surrender he was pledged to go wherever Visconti might direct. He was ordered to Milan. There he began a double game. Nursing in his heart the hope of returning to Padua some day, he now gave all his attention to allaying Gian Galeazzo's suspicions. He, in appearance, devoted himself to pleasure, to dancing, to jousts; mixing freely with the gentlemen of Milan.<sup>1</sup> All was faithfully reported to Visconti; but one fox knew another, and the Count of Virtù shrewdly remarked, "Ogni animale si domestica eccetto la volpe." Novello went further in his efforts to conciliate Gian Galeazzo. He made a formal and voluntary surrender of all his rights over Padua and its territory. But in the middle of all this courtship, Carrara was planning the murder of Visconti. He proposed to surround him one day when out hunting, and to despatch him. The lord of Milan, however, was not so easily caught; the plot was discovered, and Visconti, behaving in a truly Viscontean fashion, pretended that he did not believe in Carrara's complicity. He made him a present of the castle and territory of Cortusone, near Asti. This kindly deed was only, in fact, a more intricate, and therefore a preferable, way of securing Novello's murder; for the people of Asti were violently Ghibelline, and their minds were inflamed against Carrara as a Guelf. They were aware that to despatch him would be no crime in Visconti's eyes. But Novello's acuteness saved him. The moment he reached Cortusone he read the situation. With consummate address he called the peasants together, made a humorous speech<sup>2</sup> about his Guelfish leanings

<sup>1</sup> "Diedesi ad un altro modo di vivere ed ad un'altra regola della vita sua, andando visitare le feste, le nozze, e davasi al danzare, ed alle giostre ed ad altri piaceri" (Gattari, *op. cit.*).

<sup>2</sup> He began by assuring them that "Io parlo come gentiluomo cacciato e non come Signore."

and Ghibelline birth; and ended by remitting for ten years all taxes due to him as lord of Cortusone. He converted a fictitious hatred into a real gratitude. In return for such liberality, the peasants told Carrara that in almost every road and lane an ambush lay concealed against his life. It was clear that he must escape. He determined to make for Florence, where the hatred of Visconti, and the alarm caused by his attitude towards Tuscany, promised a welcome to any foes of his house. Novello announced that he was vowed to a pilgrimage at the shrine of St. Anthony of Vienne. He left Asti without giving the news time to reach Gian Galeazzo. Accompanied by his brave wife, Taddea d'Este—a woman of nearly inexhaustible fortitude, as her subsequent wanderings and sufferings proved—his two sons, and two servants, he crossed the Cenis in deep snow, for it was March, and made his way by Vienne to Avignon, where he was well received by the pope. From thence the whole family sailed down the Rhone to Marseilles, and there, with some difficulty, took ship for Genoa. But while they were off Hyères a violent storm swept down. Taddea, who was near her confinement, implored to be landed. The whole party disembarked, and, keeping along the shore in sight of their ship, they toiled on to Frejus. There the wind had fallen enough to allow them to go on board once more, but only to be tossed about with as much violence as ever. They were compelled to put in under Turbia, and spent the night in a ruined chapel, Taddea sleeping upon the broken altar. Next morning the sea had hardly moderated, yet they set out. At Ventimiglia they stayed for food; but they were seen by some of the natives, who, recognising their quality, told the governor. He sent soldiers to arrest them, and the party were forced to withdraw to a wood and defend themselves with stones. At length they were close-pressed and in great danger of being killed, when Novello offered twenty ducats to the captain of



the band, at the same time telling him that he was addressing the lord of Padua, a friend to the King of France. After some difficulty they were allowed to go. That night they spent on shore, not far from San Remo, and next morning, half starved for want of food, one of the sons, Ugolino, set off to forage. He came back with a kid, some bread, and a bottle of wine. The whole party went into an olive grove, lighted a fire, and roasted the kid. Two of their number kept watch on the tree-tops while the others ate. In the middle of their meal the watchers cried that some one was approaching. Novello and his sons drew their swords and waited. The alarm, however, proved to be false. The men who now entered the wood had been despatched in search of Carrara to tell him that Adorno, doge of Genoa, had sent a ship to bring the family on their way. The Carraresi were cheered by this welcome help, and, embarking once more, they purposed sailing straight to Genoa; but again the storm bore down on them, and they were driven into Savona. There they found friends, the Florentine Donati and others, who prepared a supper for them, for it was now nightfall. The wanderers had not sat down to the food they needed so much, when a message came from Adorno telling them to leave Savona at once, as Gian Galeazzo's emissaries were in Genoa, threatening instant war if the Republic sheltered the Carraresi. Supperless, they went to sea again, and in the early morning put into Genoa disguised as pilgrims. They stayed in the city only a few hours, and then sailed away down that fairy coastland, past Nervi, Porto Fino, Santa Margherita, Rapallo, till they came to Porto Venere. There they landed and went to a small inn to procure some food. They had hardly tasted the meat, when Donati rushed in to say that Galeazzo Porro, a captain in Visconti's pay, was coming with forty horse, on his way to Pisa in search for them. Nowhere could they escape the lord of Milan. The whole family rose in haste, and



hid themselves in a neighbouring wood. The strain became almost more than Taddea could endure—she nearly succumbed; but, supported by Novello and her own high courage, they both pushed on to Pisa, where they confidently looked for help from their friend Gambacorta. It was evening when they came under the walls of the town. They found messengers from Gambacorta awaiting them, to forbid them to enter Pisa on any account, as Porro was on the look-out for them. Almost crushed, they turned aside to a little hostelry; they found that full, and were obliged to make their lodging in the stables. Taddea went to sleep in the manger, while Novello and Donati divided the night into watches. It was near midnight, and Donati was on guard, when he heard the trampling of horses' feet; his alarm, however, was banished when the new-comer proved to be a servant of Gambacorta, with horses and refreshments for the party. Next day they pushed on, avoiding Pisa, and reached Florence in safety at last.<sup>1</sup>

The hopes that Carrara had built on Florence and her aid were soon dispersed. He received a cold welcome and a hint that the Florentines would not be sorry if he would betake himself elsewhere, as they were now at peace with Visconti. But Novello knew that any peace in which Gian Galeazzo had a part must be a hollow affair, a *pace volpina*. Sooner or later he believed his chance would come, when Visconti attacked Tuscany. So for a season he bore the cold looks and obvious dislike of his hosts. And his patience met its reward. A change of feeling took place in Florence, and she began to arm. Carrara received the offer<sup>2</sup> of a company under Sir John

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this story is beautifully told by the Gattari, *loc. cit.* Francesco, languishing in prison at Como, whiled away the time by telling the tale in *terza rima*, which may still be read among Lami's *Delitiæ Eruditorum*, tom. 'xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*

Hawkwood ; but he preferred to play his part nearer Padua, which was the sole object of his policy. He set out from Florence, intending to go to Bologna by way of Ancona and Ravenna, there to arrange an attack on the Milanese. But his evil star pursued him. The winds drove him past Ravenna to Chioggia, in Venetian waters, where he was recognized and forced to put to sea again, pursued all night by the Venetian galleys. He escaped, however, and reached Bologna safely ; from thence he returned to Florence. There he found a state of things which delighted him. The Florentines were now eager for a league against Visconti, and Carrara was commissioned to start at once for Munich to persuade the elector of Bavaria to join the allies. He sailed from Leghorn to Monaco ; from thence he passed through Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, and came to Zurich. There he made friends with his landlord's son, an Italian, young Massafarro, and from him he learned that the emissaries of the ubiquitous Visconti were even then in Zurich looking for him. He left in haste, crossed the Lake of Constance, and reached Munich. Novello found little difficulty in persuading the Elector Stephen to join the league against Visconti ; and he was soon able to send the news of the elector's adhesion to Florence. But Gian Galeazzo was always well informed of what was passing at foreign courts. When he learned that Bavaria had joined his enemies, he sent for the Florentine ambassadors, who were as yet ignorant of the fact, and who were at his court trying to arrange a peace. He apologized for keeping them waiting so long, consented to their terms, and expressed himself anxious to have the signatures at once. The courier of the embassy reached Florence before Novello's messenger, who conveyed the news of the elector's adherence, could arrive, and peace was signed. When Carrara's envoy from Germany reached the city, he was told that the Florentines were sorry

for the trouble his master had taken, but that it was too late. This news was a serious blow to Novello, who was lying ill of a fever. It showed him how utterly unsupported he was, how little he could rely on anything but his own courage. But the shifty policy of Visconti again proved his best friend; a rupture soon occurred between Florence and Milan. Novello left Segna in Dalmatia, whither he had gone to see his sister, to whom he was devotedly attached. He quitted Dalmatia with better hopes, for at Segna, under his sister's care, he had recovered from his fever. Moreover, he had paid a visit to a famous witch who lived in the wild, mountainous country above the Dalmatian coast, and from her he had received a prophecy of good omen. With that courage which never deserted him, he set out to recover his principality. He entered Friuli, thanks to the connivance of Venice, who was now thoroughly awake to the Count of Virtù's unbounded ambition. At the head of a small army, recruited chiefly in Germany, but swelled by numbers of banished Paduans who flocked to his standard, he pushed straight for Padua. There was something fascinating in Novello himself, and still more so in this resolute attempt to regain his city with a handful of men—something attractive, which engaged the imagination of the people. His advance was a triumphal procession. The month was June, and in every town bands of boys and girls, crowned with roses, came out to meet him, and bid him welcome back and God-speed in his effort for Padua. It was

Roses, roses, all the way,  
And myrtle mixed in his path like mad.

The Paduans, thoroughly tired of Visconti rule, hailed Carrara with joy. The town was assaulted, help given from within, and to the cry of "Figliuoli, chi m'ama non m'abbandoni!" answered by shouts.



of "Carro, carro! Carne, carne!" Novello entered the city. He had fulfilled the witch's prophecy, given to him in the mountains above Trieste. "In the month of June he who went out by the gate came in over the wall." So, after two years' absence—two years of extraordinary adventure and wandering, of incessant plot and counterplot—the Carraresi returned to their own place (1390).<sup>1</sup>

The safety of the family became dependent once again on Venice; for this forcible occupation of Padua entailed a war with Visconti, and Novello alone was no match for the lord of Milan. But Venice was glad to see Carrara once more established as an outwork between herself and the Count of Virtù, and she offered Novello abundant though secret support from the treasury of the Republic. The league against Visconti progressed favourably as far as Carrara was concerned, and in 1391 his title to Padua was acknowledged by Gian Galeazzo, though at a rather large price—one hundred thousand florins. For the next few years the Carraresi enjoyed almost the only quiet they had ever known. Even so they were not without family mishaps. Novello sent for his wife from Florence; but Taddea seemed doomed to misfortunes on all the many voyages her fate compelled her to take. While on her way to Padua she fell into the hands of one of those robber chiefs who lived by the ransoms paid for their prizes. Taddea, however, reached Padua safely at last, and the family hoped to enjoy rest and the fruits of their labour. Novello seemed willing to adopt the right method to secure this peace. He turned his attention to the government of his city and to the encouragement of her trade. But, above all, he drew closer to Venice. He judged, and rightly, that her suspicions of Visconti were the guarantee for his own safety. Gian Galeazzo had ruined the Carraresi once; but the security of the family now depended largely on his existence, and the

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*; Verci, *op. cit.* lib. xx, ad ann. 1388-90.



prosecution of his ambitious schemes to rule all North Italy. Venice was compelled to protect every bulwark between herself and the Count of Virtù. A clearer political insight would have warned Carrara to persevere in his present line of conduct, and to avoid the possibility of a rupture with the Republic.

The next seven years witnessed the growth of the Visconti dominion, and the various transmutations of the league formed by the smaller princes of Lombardy against him. Visconti had made up his mind to absorb the lesser princes one by one. He began with Gonzaga, probably because he was a relation of the Visconti; he interfered in the Este succession; he showed a desire to attack Florence. Everywhere it was clear that he was preparing for a great stroke. One of his chief and most pressing objects was to break up the league in Lombardy, whose hostility tied his hands. For that purpose he endeavoured to win Carrara, the moving spirit of the league, to his side. He proposed a double matrimonial alliance, as a result of which Feltre, Belluno, Verona, and Vicenza should be ceded to the lord of Padua; he courted the young Carraresi who were sent to represent their father at Gian Galeazzo's coronation as Duke of Milan; he remitted part of the sum due to him by the peace of 1392. The bribe was enormously large. But Novello had learned by experience to mistrust the Duke of Milan; he had unpleasant memories connected with Visconti and Vicenza; above all, Venice was opposed to the alliance. Negotiations were broken off. Venice, and indeed all Italy, was now thoroughly alarmed by the advance of Gian Galeazzo. In the year 1399 Pisa, Perugia, Assisi, and Spoleto were in his hands, and he was drawing a cordon round Florence. The allies invited the Emperor Robert to cross the Alps and crush the Duke of Milan. Robert came, and with him the Duke of Austria. The Lombard princes flocked to join him at Trent. But before Brescia Visconti routed the

imperial army, which was saved from annihilation by the Carraresi alone. The Duke of Austria was taken prisoner, and three days later he bought his liberty by a shameful promise that when he returned to the emperor's camp he would seize and send the two Carraresi to Galeazzo. The plot was found out, and Novello withdrew to Padua. The army melted away, leaving the Emperor Robert standing alone and deserted, without men or money, a laughing-stock to all Italy.

The collapse of the emperor was a triumph for Visconti, and he at once made an advance upon Bologna. Jacopo and Francesco Carrara, the sons of Novello, were sent to help the besieged city. But the town fell, and the two young Carraresi were made prisoners. Their escape was one of the last episodes in the family history. Francesco was entrusted to the care of Gian Galeazzo's general, Facino Cane, to be brought to Milan. At Parma a Paduan living in that town told Francesco's barber of a secret way over the city walls. The same evening young Carrara slipped out of bed, and, putting on a blouse, sauntered out of the house whistling; he found the barber and the Paduan ready, and the three dropping from the wall escaped to a wood, and thence made their way to Paduan territory.<sup>1</sup> Jacopo, the other son, waited longer for his liberty. He was entrusted to the care of Gonzaga, lord of Mantua. While at Mantua he was in the habit of playing tennis under a wall, beyond which lay the lake; the balls frequently went over the wall, and one day, on going out to fetch them, Jacopo, who had been informed of the plan concerted for his escape by a letter sent to him in the belly of a fish he ate for dinner, found a boat ready and two faithful Paduans disguised as fishermen. They rowed him across the lake; horses were waiting on the other side, and he soon reached his native city.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gattari, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> See Vergerius, *Sapphics*, for the return of Francesco and Jacopo Carrara, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Scrip.* tom. xvi.

In the year 1402 the Duke of Milan had matured his plans, and was ready to attack Tuscany, but death cut him short ; he fell a victim to the plague in September. Though Italy breathed the freer, yet for Carrara the death of Visconti proved one of the greatest misfortunes that could have happened. As long as Gian Galeazzo lived, Venice was bound, whether she liked it or not, to maintain friendly relations with all the smaller princes of the mainland whose existence Visconti threatened. But now that he was dead, the Republic was freed from that necessity ; neither Carrara, nor Gonzaga, nor d'Este any longer held a pledge for her support. But more than that, the empire of Gian Galeazzo was not well cemented. It had been held together merely by the personal qualities of its creator ; on his death it fell to pieces, and there followed a struggle for the fragments. The universal quickening of ambitious hopes which followed the death of Gian Galeazzo was perhaps the greatest misfortune which he inflicted on Italy. Every prince once again burned with a fatal desire to extend his territory ; Venice felt the influence no less than Carrara and the other Signori.

The relief which Carrara and all Italy felt, when the Count of Virtù was gone, made him forget that Venice still remained a potent factor in the problem of his existence. He believed that he might now with safety resume the ambitious policy of his father, and the opportunity to embark upon this fatal course was ready to his hand. He and his family were really foredoomed, escape was impossible ; but it is part of their tragedy that they were compelled to be agents in their own destruction. Carrara accepted the offer of Feltre, Belluno, and Bassano made to him by the duchess-regent of Milan, who desired, as Gian Galeazzo had desired, to weaken the league against the Visconti by seducing Novello to their side. More than that, Novello was believed by the Venetians to entertain designs on Ferrara, and was



known to have gone there with an unnecessarily large troop of cavalry, to see the marquis, who was reported to be dying. Further, he allied himself with the illegitimate Guglielmo della Scala and his two sons Antonio and Brunoro; and by their joint efforts Verona was recovered from Milan. But della Scala died a few days later, on April 8, 1404; his two sons were first of all declared lords of Verona, but on the discovery that they were inciting Venice to attack Novello, he arrested them, sent them to Padua, and proclaimed himself lord of Verona.

The whole of this sudden expansion and success was fallacious. Novello stood on rotten ground. He had no real strength, and was unsupported by any alliance which could have justified him in offending Venice. Yet he hurried on, each new acquisition waking a deeper alarm in the mind of the republic. The duchess-regent of Milan, whose government was weak and whose state was torn by internal quarrels, had long been endeavouring to win Venice to her cause against the league, and chiefly against Carrara.<sup>1</sup> Her first overtures were refused. She then raised the price offered by the addition of Verona and Vicenza. Venice hesitated; not from any love for Carrara, but in deference to the opposition of her older politicians, who urgently dissuaded her from any course which would embark the Republic upon a land empire. At last, after long debate, the proposals of the duchess were accepted and war agreed on. This was Novello's death-warrant. Affairs were precipitated in the following way: When Carrara seized Verona, he claimed Vicenza also. But that city had always displayed an invincible repugnance to the Carraresi; she now yielded herself to Venice in order to escape Novello. The Republic accepted the dedition,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, vol. iv. bk. x. cap. i.

<sup>2</sup> See *Nuovo Arch. Ven.* tom. v. p. 383. The Senate on May 31, 1404, declared their position thus to the Milanese ambassadors:

sent a herald to require Francesco, Novello's son, to raise the siege; in an access of fury, Carrara mutilated the herald. War was declared. The forces of Visconti and Venice invested Verona and Padua in 1404. But for a year and a half the Carraresi held out. Novello was indefatigable. He drilled a militia, and himself superintended the watches on the walls. No less vigorous and brave was Jacopo at Verona; but that city fell on June 3, 1405, Jacopo was sent a prisoner to Venice, while the troops liberated from the siege went to swell the numbers of those attacking Padua.

Novello's position was hopeless and terrible. He was deserted by his sole ally, the Marchese d'Este, betrayed by his general Barbiano, his life attempted by his kinsman, another Jacopo; the plague<sup>1</sup> raged in Padua, killing five or six hundred a day; the waters of the Bachiglione were diverted and the flour mills stopped. Still Novello refused to yield. Terms were constantly offered him by Venice—a large sum of money was promised for the town; but all efforts were in vain. The reasons for this obstinacy were, first, that Novello still entertained the hope of succour from Florence—false news from that quarter buoyed him up; further, he wished to give his secret schemes in Venice time to fructify. He never abandoned the expectation that some revolution inside that city might come to his aid; and he knew that if he were captured now, all his intricate and treacherous correspondence with certain Venetian noblemen would come to light, in which case his chances of mercy were small.

*"Quod veritas est quod nos dici fecimus domino Episcopo Feltrensi, dominis Jacobo de Verme et Henrico de Scrovigniis quod in casu quo Illustris et excelsa Domina ducissa et filii libere traderent nobis dominium Civitatum Vincentie, Bassiani, Feltri et civitadi cum districtibus et pertinentiis suis ermius contente dare sibi ducatos LX mille."* But, they add, events have intervened which alter the situation, the events being Carrara's attack on Vicenza and the voluntary dedition of the city to Venice.

<sup>1</sup> See Gattari for a graphic description of the plague.

So he refused offer after offer; each time the sum proposed as the price of the city growing ominously less, as the besiegers' mines and covered ways crept nearer to the walls and the prospect of taking the town by force increased. But at last the patience of the Paduans was exhausted; they would endure no more. Novello's own hopes died away, and on November 17, 1405, he yielded Padua to the Republic, and himself to Galeazzo Grumello, her general. He and his son Francesco III. were sent to join his other son, Jacopo, in prison at Venice.

We have now reached the end. The tragic fate of the three Carraresi in the Venetian prisons excited much comment at the time, and has given rise to considerable dispute subsequently. As usual, there is a large mythical element in the popular story of their death. The secrecy and rapidity of the Venetian government lent itself to all who were anxious to make a mystery or horror out of the event, and this the Venetian people were eager to do. They hated the Carraresi, and received their prisoners with savage cries. They had not forgiven them the poisoned wells, and were only too willing to believe that the government inflicted tortures and agonies on its unhappy foes. What really happened seems to be as follows<sup>1</sup>:—Novello and Francesco were imprisoned in San Giorgio Maggiore until the Torresella dungeon in the ducal palace could be prepared for them. During this time they had an interview with the doge, and the elder Carrara expressed his penitence. The Doge Steno replied that, if he wished to show his contrition, he would induce Ubertino and Marsiglio, two members of the family still at large, to come to Venice; the Republic was anxious to have the whole of the race in their hands. The Council of Ten proceeded to prepare the case against the Carraresi. While thus engaged, two men came under their examination. The revelations which these men made as

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iv. bk. x. cap. ii.



to the information treacherously supplied to Carrara by certain members of the government appeared so grave, that the Ten asked for an addition to their numbers, and sent to Padua for all Novello's papers. Among these papers they seized his private note-book, in which were registered the names of those in his pay and an analysis of the informations he had received. These discoveries caused a panic in the government. The Carraresi were more closely imprisoned and treated with rigour, only a prisoner being allowed to wait on Novello.<sup>1</sup> The Ten asked for a further addition, and sat day and night. The revelations, which continued, grew graver and graver, and the alarm rose in proportion. Compromising papers were found in a boat near San Basso, and several Venetian nobles became implicated in the treason. The trial of the Carraresi was postponed until the case of Pisani and Gradenigo had been disposed of. In January, 1406, sentence was pronounced on both. Pisani received five years' imprisonment; Gradenigo, three years of exclusion from all offices. The trial of the Carrara family was resumed, and the Ten prepared the indictment on the charge of secret machinations against the state, which they and the whole court held to be proved by the papers before them. They delivered sentence as follows:—That all three Carraresi should be strangled in their prisons; and the execution was carried out at once. Novello and Francesco are said to have resisted to the end, struggling fiercely with the executioners. Jacopo submitted quietly, only asking

<sup>1</sup> "Et ad servendum eis deputetur unus de carceratis qui sit confidens persona; et dominus Franciscus tercius filius suus remaneat in carcere Orba cum uno ex suis pagis, illo qui ei placebit, et alter pagius licentietur."—Misti, Cons. x. p. 112, ap. Romanin, *loc. cit.*, where we may read some curious instructions as to the keys of the prisons. They were locked away in a box, the key of which was enclosed again in another box, the key of this last box being given to the doge every evening and taken by him to his bedroom.

leave to write first to his wife.<sup>1</sup> Novello was buried next day with great pomp in the church of San Stefano.<sup>2</sup> The people endorsed the judgment of their government, and showed their own relief by crying, "Homo morto non fa guerra!"

Undoubtedly the real reason for the execution of the whole family was the discoveries made after the fall of Padua. During the siege Venice had not been excessively harsh; she had again and again offered terms which men in the position of Novello and his sons might have been glad to accept. They might have sold Padua for a large sum, and obtained permission to go where they chose, provided that they did not return to the Padovano. The repeated and apparently irrational refusal of these terms naturally exasperated Venice, who was at a loss to understand its motive until the damning papers came into her hands. We notice all through the proceedings a

<sup>1</sup> Andrea Gattaro writes in tears over Jacopo. This is his description of the young Carrarese: "Era Messer Giacomo da Carrara di età d'anni 26. grande, e tutto bene formato, quanto altro cavaliere che avesse Lombardia, bianco come la Madre sapientissimo e grande amico di Dio, benigno, misericordioso; il parlar suo dolce e mansueto, e l'aere suo Angelico, ardito ed animoso, fortissimo e virtuoso, che veramente se avesse avuto vita, sarebbe riuscito un altro Scipione Africano; ma pure così hebbe fine il corso della vita sua" (Gattari, *op. cit.* p. 941). Here is his letter to his wife Belfiore: "L'infelice tuo sposo Jacopo da Carrara del qual so che avrai pietà, perche ti sempre sono stato grato ed amorevole, ed ora son privato di vita. Ti scrivo questa di mia propria mano, la quale quando avro scritta subito sarò morto. Sta sano, consolati, nè cesserai di pregar Dio per me che in questa vita più non mi potrai vedere, forse mi potrai vedere tra li martiri candidati appresso Quello che regna in Cielo." I do not know whether this is authentic, but it exists among the manuscripts of Count Robert Papafava, and is given as genuine by Cittadella, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 586.

<sup>2</sup> For long his grave was supposed to be marked by a slab bearing the letters P. N. T., which were read as "Pro norma tyrannorum." But Cicogna has shown that they really are the initials of Paolo Nicolò Tinti, a merchant buried there. See Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 41; Sanuto, *op. cit.*

crescendo of alarm on the part of the Venetians. The government were hurried into their severity by a panic. Nothing terrified Venice so much as intrigue among her own nobles, and here she found Pisani, Gradenigo, and Carlo Zeno all seriously implicated in treason. She had not forgotten either Tiepolo or Marino Falier, and her alarm made her hasty and harsh. The policy pursued by Venice was so direct, showed so little desire to finesse, that it startled the other Signori. With them it was a point to keep their enemies as prisoners; their exact equivalent might appear in the market, in which case they could be exchanged; while dead they were of use to no one. But Venice was not a Signore of the true type; she had never hitherto desired to touch the complications of the mainland; when she did, when she found herself forced into the midst of them, she was thorough. The Republic was ready, where necessary, to adopt Machiavelli's maxim, that if compelled to kill a prince it is wisdom to destroy his whole race along with him. She was not brutal, but only cold; with a constant desire for that quiet which was so imperatively demanded for her commercial prosperity.

The Carraresi died; they had not the satisfaction of foreseeing the day of reckoning in store for Venice. But the enormous extension of territory which accrued to her on the fall of the Carrara family awoke in her that fatal greed for an empire on the mainland which turned every man's hand against her and brought her face to face with the League of Cambray. The Carraresi were extinguished. Their fate was typical of that which awaited almost all the other Signori. There is something pathetic in the terrible nemesis which pursued these men; caught in the toils of a hopeless passion, dragged on whether they would or no. Theirs was a restless and unscrupulous ambition, compelled to move forward, but foredoomed to failure and death.



## Carmagnola, a Soldier of Fortune

ITALY has experienced an almost insuperable difficulty in achieving union. The fact that the difficulty has only now been overcome serves to emphasize the length and labour of the process. The history of Italy is the history of highly organized but conflicting particles. The episodes of her development depend upon the mutual destruction of these particles, no one of which possessed sufficient power to retain its own vitality while absorbing that of its neighbour. We may take this incapacity for unification as a sign that the major force of the Italian nature has been intellectual rather than practical; that Italy's grasp of understanding was complete, swift, and sure upon the centre of each situation; as the note of a character intellectually occupied by the problem of movement; of a temper interested in the formation of many types rather than in the selection of one; of a life always at the red-heat of revolution, burning continually in the fires of destruction and re-creation. Her acumen perceived the antithesis too immediately upon the thesis to allow of any pause. This speed of vision contributed to rescue the country from thorough conquest by any foreigner. The invader was dazzled, confused, and repulsed by the rapid changes. While he had just begun to recognize a direction, Italy, the land he supposed himself to be subduing and stamping, had, as it were, altered its identity—was no longer the same Italy; had measured all that the conqueror could do; had reached the farthest point of its helix, and had already commenced the backward sweep.

But, though this quality helped to baffle those who attempted to master the country, it exposed her, inside her own borders, to unrest, to violent change, to warfare among her vital self-asserting members, to torture from her own too active self. She became a land of contradictions; refusing to dwell on any one moment because she saw that it was only a moment. Each statement instantly met its contradiction, based upon that point of falsity which is absolutely inseparable from all human exposition of truth. The very power that enabled the nation to posit the obverse compelled it to a consciousness of the reverse. It was condemned to a perpetual demonstration of instability, as the result of its too ardent desire to find absolute stability. The dynamics of balance were always potent enough to destroy the statics. Therefore the people who had dogmatized faith for the whole of Europe were themselves deeply sceptical. Those who had formulated law presented a chaos of lawlessness. The Italian epic is no sooner created than it offers its own body as the food for parody and satire. Conviction and calm belief were impossible for Italy. She could formulate what the northern nations accepted with earnestness—law, art, religion, the idea of freedom; but the creator could not receive its own creation as an article of creed.

Among the many particular curses entailed upon Italy by her fatal inability to unite, few were more widely or more bitterly felt than the curse of mercenary troops and wandering armies.<sup>1</sup> Philosophers and historians, Machiavelli and Villani, are agreed in lamentations over the decline of city militias and the supremacy of hired arms. These wandering bands were in their origin the children of disunion, and to the end they retained the marks of their parentage. They had their birth in that necessity which compelled the despots to use foreign troops in their various wars,

<sup>1</sup> See *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. xv.

either against their brother lords, or against their native town whose tyranny they were usurping. It was imperative that a tyrant's soldiers should be men of no party ; purely fighting men, and nothing more ; unfettered by any ties of politics or blood. Therefore the Signori called to their service Bretons, Gascons, English, Hungarians, and Germans. Their armies were composed of men and officers who spoke no Italian and whose sole glance was directed to the purse-strings of their employers. But these mercenary warriors, bound together by a common interest which was antagonistic to that of their employers, were not slow to perceive that, in order to make their own position entirely secure, they must choose their leader from among themselves ; that he must be a man whose sympathies and aims were identical with their own ; that their head must be structurally and vitally a portion of their organism. In obedience to this instinct, the mercenary army which Mastino della Scala was forced to disband in 1338, when it found itself without a master, elected Werner, Duke of Wislingen, as its captain ; and the Grand Company, the first fully developed company of mercenaries, was let loose on Italy.

Under Duke Werner the Grand Company learned self-discipline from the necessities of their case. Beyond the circle of their camp the world was all their enemy. But it was a world that had neither unity nor force enough to crush them. So long as the outermost line of their entrenchments remained unbroken, they were as united, as potent, as an undissipated poison-germ floating in the blood of the nation. On every hand they were secure. If war failed them, the country lay open for them to pillage. The burghers were wealthy and timorous, the peasants unarmed. The soldier had only to put out his hand and take the harvests of the one and the gold of the other. In fact, the mercenaries discovered how to rifle their masters ; and learned, moreover, that they could



do so with impunity. After Duke Werner's death and the dispersion of the Grand Company, two other leaders, Fra Moriale, a Provençal, and Count Lando, a German, continued and developed the traditions of the foreign mercenaries. Fra Moriale especially was a born organizer. He attracted to his standard all the evil humours of Italy, the bankrupts in fortune or in fame. The nucleus of his band was foreign, it is true ; but many of his soldiers and most of his camp followers were the ruined outcasts of Italian society. This is a fact of signal importance, for it bore directly on the development of the first company of native as distinguished from foreign mercenaries. Moriale's work was a work of consolidation. His company was governed by one fundamental maxim—absolute liberty outside the camp, rigid discipline and justice within. The whole band was drawn closer together, and taught to look upon the camp as their city and their home. Through his action the mercenary army became self-sustaining, therefore more formidable and longer-lived. Moriale's work had been too thoroughly accomplished to be broken up at his death. The mercenaries elected as their new captain Count Lando, and their life of rapine and of plunder went on as before. They moved freely from territory to territory, sweeping the harvests from the fields, exacting what sums they chose from the prince or the republic whose lands they occupied, wearing the country barer and barer by their depredations. The burden became intolerable, the military occupation showed no signs of coming to an end, and Italy at length prepared to make an effort to suppress the mischief which was eating its way into her very vitals.

The pope, Florence, and Venice joined in a league against the adventurers. Though the curse of disunion, of jealousy and conflicting interests, broke up the league and rendered it inefficient, yet out of this effort came the purely native company of Alberico da

Barbiano, the first great Italian *condottiere*. Blessed by the pope and fired by St. Catherine of Siena, Alberico won the victory of Marino, and from that moment the nature of mercenary warfare in Italy was changed. The foreigners disappeared, and Italians took their place.

Italy, however, was not destined to escape the curse entailed by her own sloth. All she succeeded in achieving was the substitution of native adventurers for the foreigners she had expelled. The change in their aspect made little difference in their character; the one was the lineal descendant of the other, inheriting and continuing the same traditions of war. Italy had hoped to free herself from mercenary arms; but she failed. The triumph of the Guelfs and the insurgence of the communes had destroyed the aristocracy, the nucleus of the military element. The leading politicians now were merchants or bankers—men who clung to their money and believed that all was compassable by gold. From the ranks of these came the Signori; and they set themselves more or less deliberately to debauch the citizens and to render them effete. Their policy was only too successful. When the townsfolk preferred a tax on silver and on salt—silver for the rich and salt for the poor—to military service in defence of their liberty, of what use was it that Boiardo sang the praise of chivalry and arms? The country with its own voice declared itself a prey to the mercenaries. The essence of the soldier-spirit was gone. Italy turned willingly from the field to the counting-house. She shrank from the constant proof of her arms, and in the day of her need she was unable to bear them.

The native companies of adventure present two marked characteristics. They were united and solid upon the basis of their profession, opposed as soldiers to all other classes and professions in Italy; they were also mutually antagonistic and jealous of each other inside the limits of their profession. The previous

existence of the Signori inevitably determined the aspect assumed by the native mercenaries. The minute partition of Italy among pretty tyrants, swayed by various and conflicting aims, prepared the way for the minute divisions of the great army, and for the existence of the various *condottieri*, each serving his own selfish ends and standing in rivalry with his fellows, a rivalry which prevented them from ever becoming masters of Italy in any permanent sense. But, though cloven and broken among themselves, the mercenaries were solid and cohesive against the world outside them. The reason for this solidarity in their profession lay deep in the spirit of the race. The Italians never possessed the sense of nationality, except an ideal nationality in Rome. They were therefore able to experience within the borders of their own land the effect and the fascination of cosmopolitanism, together with its accompanying democratic tendency. An art or a profession, not a city or a country, became the bond of union. The true *patria* was a common enthusiasm for war, for painting, for scholarship, for religion. The bands of adventure are not a singular phenomenon. Side by side with them there rose the companies of religious fanatics, the school of John of Ravenna, the workshops of Squarcione and Verrocchio. Alberico's native company of St. George was the matrix of a hundred captains of adventure, "the Trojan horse of Italian warfare," from whose entrails a breed of soldiers was born, destined to cover Italy with their arms, to make her theirs for a time, to serve their purpose, and to pass away; just as John of Ravenna's lecture-room was the Trojan horse of Italian scholarship, a hotbed for the growth of a hundred students, destined to seize and hold the world of lost classics, to recall Italy to Rome, to serve their purpose, and to pass away. And the action of the *condottieri* and of the Humanists is very similar. Both appear as interruptions—the one in the political, the other in the intellectual process. Both are solvents. Humanism



proclaimed a doctrine of individual freedom; adventure destroyed the political system, breaking down the despots and paving the way first for the conquest by Charles VIII., and then for the ultimate settlement of death under Charles V.

The result of Italy's effort to shake the foreign mercenaries from her throat was that Italians took the place of strangers. But the gain to the country was small. The chief difference between native and foreign commanders lay in the systematization of arms which the former effected. The Italians made an art of war, as they made an art of everything which they touched. Obeying a common impulse, the captains of adventure turned campaigning into a game. They laid down the rules and imposed the conditions under which it must be played; and few would have ventured to violate these rules, for that would have been to renounce the *rôle* of artist and to outrage the national instinct for limitations and precision. In fact, war became an end in itself and not a means. The attention of commanders was directed not so much to victory as to a study and enjoyment of the moves by which they achieved success or suffered defeat. Under these conditions the art of war soon degenerated into a pedantry that admitted such an anomaly as a technical victory, and bore its fruits at Fornovo and at Agnadella. And the laws of this game, drawn up by professional soldiers, were framed to suit the soldier, not the prince who employed him. The interests of a general counselled him not to finish any campaign too rapidly; therefore no advantages were pressed to the full, no decisive blows struck. As a point of military etiquette, prisoners were released immediately after an engagement. Troops went into winter quarters even in the month of August.<sup>1</sup> To prolong a campaign was to

<sup>1</sup> See Battistella, *Il Conte Carmagnola* (Genova, Sabilimento dell'annuario Generale: 1889), p. 182. A masterly and exhaustive treatment of the subject. For the facts as regards Carmagnola I shall follow Sig. Battistella closely throughout this essay.

prolong the salaries of the commander and of all who served under him. Nor were the leaders unwilling to make service as light as possible for their men. By general agreement night attacks were abandoned and piquet and outpost duty might be dispensed with; quarter was invariably given. The life of the common soldier had no hardships after he had mastered his drill and the routine of service. The war he waged was not so much against the troopers of the hostile army as against the unarmed peasants of the place where he might be encamped. Wherever found, they were his prey, to work his will upon in any manner he chose. The democratic spirit of all true vagabonds, whether students, friars, soldiers, or artists, reigned in the camps. The soldier began life upon a strict equality, the sole title to distinction being excellence in his profession. Personal attachment helped to bind the men to one another in a union as fraternal as that of a monastery. Beyond the lines a soldier's freedom was unrestrained. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—the watchwords of democracy, of revolution, of socialism—were the motto of the camp. But the democracy of arms, as it manifested itself in Italy, concealed nothing formative within its breast; it was chaos come again. The camp, therefore, attracted all the restless blood, the strong physical natures, the coarser-fibred appetites of Italy; just as the wandering religious companies attracted those of imaginative, vague, ecstatic, and ardent temperament.

Circumstances rendered the position of the *condottieri* powerful. The Signori were compelled, by the pressure of their neighbours, to use these mercenary captains; but they were costly weapons, and in using them the princes became bankrupt. On one condition alone were the despots able to retain the command of events. Their exchequer must be full. But it was only the wealthiest states, such as Venice or Milan, which could resist the drain of war. The moment the despot failed financially, the captains of

adventure were masters of the situation ; their ruined employer could not dismiss them unpaid, nor could he hire other arms against them. There was, however, a weakness in the position of the mercenaries. They were not at one among themselves ; they could not agree to conquer and divide ; they were ready to take the field against one another, not to destroy, but to supplant in the receipt of salary ; they lacked width of ambition ; they were, in fact, for the most part stupid. The weakness showed itself whenever the *condottieri* had to deal with solvent masters. A full purse could play them against each other, and store their labours for its own advantage. This was their real danger. Their perilous war was waged, not in the field against their brother captains, but in the cabinet against the princes who had escaped financial ruin. How dangerous this conflict might be received convincing proof in the tragic end of so many of these adventurers—Gabrino Fondulo in his iron cage ; Vignate executed at Milan ; Carmagnola beheaded at Venice : these we must remember as counterbalances when we think of Michelotti, lord of Perugia, or Sforza, Duke of Milan.

The story of Carmagnola illustrates these relations between the Signori and the captains of adventure. His career offers an example of the height to which a *condottiere* might aspire, of the mistake he might make, and of the fate that possibly lay in store for him. The problem presented to Filippo Visconti, the last of the Visconti Dukes of Milan, when the murder of his brother Giovanni Maria left him sole prince, was how to recover the duchy, to which he had succeeded in name alone. On his father Gian Galeazzo's death, the dukedom had been partitioned among Galeazzo's generals, who had each seized the part that lay nearest to hand. Filippo determined to recover his lost patrimony. But he had many difficulties to contend with. He was without troops or generals, and his own peculiar temperament offered a



serious obstacle. He suffered from a morbid timidity. A painful sensitiveness as to his personal appearance kept him in torture, and forced him to shrink from all publicity. He chose to live hidden away in the seclusion of his palace, surrounded by guards whom he distrusted, and over whose movements he set the watch of other and more secret guards, upon whom he himself kept a furtive and a timorous regard. He never escaped from the nightmare of murder. He daily changed his bedroom, and took his rest, as it were, with one eye open, fixed upon the *cubicularii*<sup>1</sup> who protected his most private chamber. Filippo was possessed by the Visconti passion for intrigue, heightened almost to the pitch of insanity. In the recesses of his palace he spun from his restless brain a web of plot and counterplot; the one forestalling, crossing, baffling, defeating the other, till his own perception of the object in view was sometimes in danger of being lost in the maze. His mind presented a pandemonium of schemes, as though the regulative faculty had been paralyzed, leaving the designing powers alone in force. Nevertheless, Filippo applied himself to his task. His marriage with Beatrice di Tenda, widow of Facino Cane, brought him the nucleus of her husband's army, but his own timidity prevented him from taking the field in person, and his father's officers were now his enemies; for each of them held some fragment of the duchy which Filippo intended to recover. He was in search of a general, and, following Facino's death-bed advice, he turned his attention to a rising young officer, Francesco Bussone—called Carmagnola, from his birthplace not far from Turin.

Francesco Bussone<sup>2</sup> was born of humble parents,

<sup>1</sup> See Candido Decembrio, *Life of Visconti*, cap. xlv.

<sup>2</sup> I shall keep the spelling *Bussone* rather than *Bussoni*, because the name appears so in a notarial deed of 1412, preserved in the communal archives of Carmagnola (see Battistella, *op. cit.* doc. i.), and because it is so given in an inscription on the façade of the church of S. Agostino at Carmagnola.

probably between the years 1380 and 1385.<sup>1</sup> His father is said to have been a swine-herd,<sup>2</sup> and Francesco followed the paternal calling. He seems to have been a robust and hardy lad—"era di corpo bellissimo," says a chronicler—and he attracted the notice of one of Facino Cane's soldiers, who induced him to go to camp. There he seems to have found himself in his element. His personal courage, astuteness, and general suitability to camp life soon brought him to the front, and by 1410 we find him an officer fighting under Facino before Casale. And here we get a little touch which throws light on the irritable temper and violent language which characterised Francesco throughout his career. His rapid advance seems to have created jealousy, and to some of his enemies he sent the following reply: "Poltroni, vestras recepimus diffidentie litteras. Et vobis inchachamus. Datum Caxalis. Sancti Evasii. Die XIII<sup>o</sup> Maij, 1410."<sup>3</sup>

It is doubtful when Carmagnola first came under the notice of Filippo Maria Visconti. There is a story that Visconti owed his life to timely warning of a plot hatched by Facino; and that Carmagnola, then a simple soldier in Facino's service, was the instrument. However that may be, the decisive moment for Carmagnola arose when Facino on his death-bed advised Filippo Maria to marry Beatrice and to appoint Carmagnola his commander-in-chief.

There was much to recommend Bussone to the duke's favour. He was humbly born, with no powerful connections; poor, and therefore open to the lure of money; above all he, unlike most of his brother

<sup>1</sup> So Battistella. His other biographers give the date as 1390, but the probabilities seem against it. See Tenivelli, *Biografia Piemontese*, iii. p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Battistella is inclined to think the Bussone were small farmers, on the strength of the phrase "spectabilis vir," applied to Francesco's father in the deed of 1412. But we must remember that Francesco was by that time a person of note, and the lawyer may have shrunk from offending him by stating the family calling.

<sup>3</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 7, note 4.

*condottiere*, held no part of Gian Galeazzo's dominions which Filippo Maria had now resolved to reconquer. Filippo gave him a command, though not the supreme command, and Carmagnola was with the duke when, on June 16, 1412, he entered Milan, acclaimed by the people, and expelled the two usurping Visconti, Estore and Giancarlo, who retired to Monza. Following up this success, Filippo sent his army under Carmagnola to besiege Monza. The town made a feeble resistance, but the castle held out till May 1, 1413, when it surrendered on terms. This was the first step in the duke's favour, and in the deed of surrender we find Carmagnola styled *egregius et strenuus vir, consiliarius et mareschalus noster dilectus*.<sup>1</sup> From this moment he advanced rapidly in the duke's good graces, was admitted to his counsels, and appears to have been called upon to take a part in Filippo's darker proceedings; at all events, there is ground for believing that he had a hand in the execution of the Duchess Beatrice, which took place in a castle between Milan and Pavia.<sup>2</sup>

The appearance of the Emperor Sigismund in Italy, with the intent to exact from the Duke of Milan the oath of allegiance as imperial vicar—an intent in which he failed—served to rally and unite the various enemies of Filippo, and compelled him to rely more and more on his single trusty general Carmagnola, who became the confidant and the executor of Filippo Maria's schemes<sup>3</sup> for the recovery of the duchy. Carmagnola's success, whether by arms, craft, or bribery, was continuous and rapid. He concluded a truce with Monferrat, occupied Oltrepò and Bobbio, turned his attention to Brescia and Bergamo, then

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Eberardo Windrek, *Vita Sigismundi Imp.*, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> He was a witness to the deed by which Visconti renounced his rights over Vicenza and Verona in favour of Venice, and made a league with the Republic (*Battistella, op. cit.* p. 28).



held by Pandolfo Malatesta, but retired on the conclusion of an armistice, and took Alexandria. All his operations mark him as an active, indefatigable, resourceful commander—a point we must bear in mind when we come to discuss his military operations while in Venetian service.

In the course of these successes he had been handsomely rewarded by Filippo Maria. On November 11, 1414, he received the investiture of Castelnovo and Caselle, with the title of count and the right to bear the Visconti arms and surname. Later on he was appointed to the supreme command of the ducal troops, was named First Councillor, and promised an alliance by marriage with the ducal family, large revenues, and a palace in Milan.

But Filippo had more work for Carmagnola to carry out, and still greater honours and rewards lay in store for him. The duke and his general set themselves steadily to effect the complete reconstruction of Gian Galeazzo's dominions, with a mixture of cunning, treachery, and force which rapidly carried them to a successful issue. The populace of Milan was first cowed, and Filippo's authority firmly based upon terror by the appalling tortures he inflicted on the assassins of his brother, Duke Giovanni Maria. Then the powerful family of Beccaria was attacked in its stronghold of Pavia, and the head of the family, Castellino, taken and killed (1415). The obvious intention of Filippo Maria to treat the other Signori of Lombardy in like fashion, one by one, drew them together for common safety. The coalition—which included Gabrino Fondulo, lord of Cremona; Giovanni Vignati, of Lodi; and the Arcelli, of Piacenza—centred round Pandolfo Malatesta, lord of Brescia.

It would be beyond the scope of this essay, which deals primarily with the relations between Carmagnola and Venice, to follow in detail the operations of the successful *condottiere*. It will suffice to note briefly the various steps by which Carmagnola and the duke

attained their object. The operations began to the north of Milan by an assault on Como, held by the Rusca family, in which Carmagnola met with his first and almost only check in the course of his service with the duke. He was repulsed in an attempted escalade; but, in dread of further assaults, Rusca ceded the signory to Visconti in 1416. The town of Lecco fell next, though the castle held out till early in 1417. The Vignati were then attacked. Giacomo, son of Giovanni, Count of Lodi, was made prisoner, and only restored to his father on condition that the Vignati acknowledged themselves vassals of the duke. A few months later father and son were treacherously seized and hanged (August, 1416). Carmagnola's next operations were directed against Trezzo, a strong castle on the line of the Adda, commanding a passage into the Bergamasque. The siege of Trezzo is one of Carmagnola's more brilliant military feats; though even here the place was not actually stormed, but surrendered on the threat that Paolo Colleoni, one of the family who was holding it for Malatesta, would be hanged if it did not yield (1417). Vercelli was next recovered from the Marquis of Monferrat by treaty. The Arcelli were attacked in Piacenza, and Gabrino Fondulo in Cremona; but Malatesta came to the assistance of both. Though the town of Piacenza was occupied, the castle of S. Antonino still held out, and Carmagnola had to content himself for the present with capturing a number of small towns in the Cremonese. A clever ambushade, however, presently placed in his hands two members of the Arcelli family, and with these he returned to Piacenza. Repeating his tactics so successful at Trezzo, he threatened to hang the two prisoners if Filippo Arcelli refused to surrender the castle. He did refuse, and Carmagnola carried out his threat. But in June, 1418, Arcelli was forced to yield, and the duke, on payment of a large sum, entered on possession of Piacenza.

This unbroken series of successes won for Car-

magnola the entire confidence of the duke; and his army at this time numbered 25,000 foot and 4,000 horse. A large part of Filippo's designs had already been realized; but there still remained the most important districts to the east. Gabrino Fondulo was still lord in Cremona, and Malatesta still held Bergamo and Brescia. The attack was continued against Cremona first. But after sacking a large part of the country, reliefs furnished by Malatesta compelled Carmagnola to abandon the Cremonese, and he turned his attention to Bergamo. Partly by brilliant military operations, partly by bribes, he became master of a fort called La Cappella, whence he bombarded the city, which fell in July, 1419. From Bergamo as a base, he pushed on into the Bresciano and captured a number of important positions; then turning south again, he laid siege to Cremona. By the beginning of 1420 he had persuaded Fondulo to come to an accord with the duke, and to sell him Cremona for 40,000 florins. Brescia now alone remained, and in April, 1420, Carmagnola began his final attack. In one of the many skirmishes of this campaign Carmagnola, whose personal bravery was always conspicuous, received an arrow wound in the neck. It does not seem to have been very serious, though it necessitated his retirement to Milan for a time; but we must emphasize the fact, however, as it may help to account for the ill-health which overtook him after he entered the service of Venice. Carmagnola was soon back in camp, and after defeating, in a brilliant engagement at Montechiari, the reinforcements which Malatesta's brother was sending to his aid under the command of Lodovico Migliorati, and on the conclusion of the treaty between Visconti and Venice (February, 1421), which destroyed Pandolfo's last hopes of relief, Brescia was surrendered to Filippo Maria for 34,000 florins (March 16, 1421).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The account of these events is based entirely on Battistella's admirably lucid and critical history.



Thus in the course of ten years, by a combination of indefatigable energy, military skill, cunning, and treachery, Carmagnola had restored to Filippo Maria the entire duchy of Gian Galeazzo—a truly remarkable performance which filled the contemporary world with astonishment and admiration, and raised Carmagnola's military reputation to the highest pitch. It is true that a skilful employment of money, political astuteness, and treachery had as much to do with these successes as military ability; but the sieges of Trezzo and Bergamo and the battle of Montechiari were undoubtedly brilliant feats of arms, and the whole result justified the commanding position which Carmagnola had won. We must bear in mind the qualities displayed by Carmagnola in the service of Milan when we come to discuss his relations with his subsequent employer, the Venetian Republic.

Nor was Filippo a laggard in rewarding his successful general. When the coalition of the Signorotti under Malatesta assumed a threatening attitude after the capture of Pavia and the slaughter of Castellino Beccaria, the duke gave effect to his promise of a matrimonial alliance with the house of Visconti. Antonia Visconti, widow of Francesco Barbavara, was betrothed to Carmagnola, and he received the fief of Sale, near Castelnovo, on the Scrivia, and the *octroi* dues on wine, bread, and meat in the district of Castelazzo. The marriage with Antonia was, perhaps, not quite a spontaneous act on the part of the duke; it is possible that Carmagnola's own astuteness and cunning had much to do with bringing it about. It seems that he at first aspired to the hand of Margherita, sister of Filippo Arcelli, and induced the duke to support his suit and to overcome Filippo's repugnance to such a *mésalliance*, which the Arcelli resented on account of Carmagnola's low birth. The Arcelli yielded, but at the last moment, when all was ready for the ceremony, Filippo Maria took alarm at the prospect of seeing two such powerful personages

united, broke off the match in a hurry, and gave his kinswoman Antonia to the general he intended to bind to his sole service.<sup>1</sup> However that may be, the Visconti alliance was an undoubted honour and advantage to Carmagnola. The wedding took place with great splendour on February 14, 1417, soon after Carmagnola had captured both Trezzo and Lecco. It brought him presently the full citizenship of Milan and the right to be treated *come gli altri di nostra agnazione di Visconti*,<sup>2</sup> with immunity from all taxes and dues. The duke also gave him a palace, called the Broletto Nuovo—a magnificent building, styled *domus magna*—which Carmagnola set about adorning and improving: works which he never finished. His income at this time reached the high figure of 40,000 gold florins a year. He had now touched his apogee. Next to the duke, he was the greatest man in Milan.

But Filippo had, in all his generosity, a further intention than that of merely satisfying a victorious general. The duke believed that he was binding Carmagnola to his service by ties which the soldier's cupidity would prevent him from breaking under any pressure of neglect or disgrace. Visconti did not desire to see this captain, whose value he had just learned to appreciate, take pay from any other master than himself; yet he was fully resolved that Carmagnola should never become so powerful as to be a serious danger to his own authority, or to play the part his father's generals had played during his own minority. Such an issue was not entirely improbable, for the rapidity of Carmagnola's success had won for him an Italian reputation, and we shall presently see that in the mind of the *condottiere* there were already in process of formation ambitious schemes which extended beyond the mere service of the duke, however liberal a paymaster he might be.

<sup>1</sup> Boselli, *Storia Piacentina*, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 44.

Meantime, however, Filippo Maria had other work for Carmagnola to perform, and he was still to set the seal on his military fame by one great victory before the long decline began. The recovery of the duchy was far from satisfying the ambition of Filippo Maria. Already he had begun looking westward to Genoa, where civic disturbances and the movements of the *fuorusciti* seemed to offer a pretext for intervention, and southward towards Florence, some of whose possessions in the Romagna and in Lucca he coveted. The duke sent his forces, first under Guido Torelli and then under the supreme command of Carmagnola, into Genoese territory. Genoa resisted; but after the defeat of its galleys by the help of the Aragonese fleet, the city surrendered and was followed shortly by the whole Genoese littoral, which passed into the hands of Visconti in November, 1421.

But no sooner were the affairs of Genoa settled than Carmagnola's services were required to the north. Albert von Sax of Misox, on the plea of moneys due to him by Gian Galeazzo, had seized Bellinzona, while the cantons of Uri and Unterwald, profiting by the disorders which followed on Gian Galeazzo's death, had occupied the Val Levantina and the Val d'Ossola. Von Sax and the cantons, with a view to their common defence against the Visconti, entered into a pact by which they bound themselves to mutual support, while von Sax gave a pledge that he would not surrender Bellinzona to the duke without the consent of his allies. The position of both the cantons and von Sax was recognized by investitures granted by the Emperors Robert and Sigismund. But von Sax, in alarm at Filippo Maria's growing supremacy as a neighbour, endeavoured to convert Bellinzona into a Milanese fief. To this his allies objected, and to be rid of the difficulty he sold them Bellinzona for 2,400 florins. The duke now made formal demand for the restitution of the town on reimbursement of the



sum paid by the cantons. The cantons refused, and Filippo resolved on war. His generals Angelo della Pergola and Carmagnola between them recovered first the Val d'Ossola, then the town of Bellinzona and the Val Levantina almost to the Gothard.

The men of Uri and Unterwald marched over the passes and came down nearly to Arbedo at the mouth of the Val Misox, near Bellinzona. They numbered at most 4,000 men, while Carmagnola was in command of at least 12,000 foot and 6,000 horse. By an able ruse and skilful strategy he succeeded in attacking the Swiss in front and on the flanks. But the resistance of the Swiss pikes was so formidable that della Pergola gave the order for the cavalry to dismount and support the infantry. After eight hours of furious fighting the Swiss were overwhelmed and routed. The victory of Arbedo was the crowning glory in Carmagnola's military career; for there he worsted the redoubtable Swiss, whose achievements at Morgarten and Zempach were still present in men's minds. The glory of the victory of Arbedo must, however, be shared by Carmagnola's brother-general, Angelo della Pergola.

And now we come to Carmagnola's appointment as Governor of Genoa, the event to which most of his historians attribute the beginning of the misunderstandings with the duke which eventually led to his quitting the Milanese service, abandoning his wife, his family, his palace, and his estates, and entering the pay of the Venetian Republic. Hitherto it has been supposed that Filippo, having conceived some suspicion of Carmagnola, or jealous of his growing reputation and authority, made up his mind to set him aside for a time and to employ some of the many other captains who were at his disposal. He believed that Carmagnola was too closely bound to him by pecuniary and social interests to dream of taking offence. The duke did not desire to alarm his general, but merely to allow the warmth of his celebrity to cool. He therefore sent him to govern Genoa. Carmagnola's

vanity soon opened his eyes to the fact that he had been virtually cashiered. He refused to submit. After fruitless appeals by letter, he sought a personal interview, was refused, and, threatening vengeance, he left the Milanese territory for the court of Savoy. Such has hitherto been the story; but the patient research and criticism of Sig. Battistella places the matter in a new and truer light, though, as we shall presently see, storm-clouds were already beginning to gather over the head of the successful and irritable *condottiere*. What really happened was this. The Genoese had applied to the duke to appoint Carmagnola sole governor in place of the four commissioners sent from Milan in March, 1422. After the victory of Arbedo Filippo complied with their request, and Carmagnola was commissioned in November of that year. His relations with the duke appear to have remained quite normal and friendly during the period of his office down to October, 1424. The Genoese were content with his rule. He showed some rapacity, perhaps, in demanding an increase in salary, though he did not ask more than Boucicault had received. When Filippo desired the Genoese to raise a fleet in order to allow him to assist Johanna, Queen of Naples, against Alfonso of Aragon, Carmagnola successfully carried out his instructions; nor is there any reason to suppose that his pride was hurt or his hopes disappointed when the command was given to Guido Torelli. There were, however, other reasons why Carmagnola should take umbrage and begin to think that he was losing the duke's confidence and favour. Visconti was engaged in operations of war against the Florentines, and the Romagna, and those operations were entrusted to Sizzo da Montagnana and Angelo della Pergola, not to Carmagnola, who was kept inactive in Genoa. Then, again, the duke had sent for that great officer Attendolo Sforza. Finally, there was the disappointment about the command of the expedition which the duke intended to send into Apulia. For this purpose

Filippo recalled Carmagnola from Genoa to Milan (September, 1424). There seems to be no doubt on the point. "Il Conte Carmagnola va in Puglia," so wrote the Dieci di Balia from Florence to their ambassador in Rome on August 20, 1424, and the fact would seem to prove that Carmagnola had no grounds for suspecting that the duke wished to shelve him. But a change in the situation of affairs in Naples, the successes of Queen Johanna and Louis of Anjou, rendered the expedition unnecessary, and to Carmagnola's chagrin the troops were disbanded.

Carmagnola, however, seems to have found that a change had in fact come over his position at the ducal court. His long career of success had raised him many enemies among the intimate councillors and associates of Filippo Maria, jealous of the *novus homo*, and resentful of his brusque manners, irritable temper, and violent tongue. Powerful enemies he had, too, among the families of the many petty tyrants he had helped to overthrow. His master the duke was suspicious, timid, open to impressions from his immediate surroundings. Carmagnola had been absent from the court and from the field for twenty-two months, and Filippo had learned that he was not his only general. The task of the courtiers was not difficult.

But what was it that they whispered in the suspicious ear of Filippo, and was there any truth in it? We have no direct evidence; but we may admit the fact of Filippo's coolness, and Carmagnola's subsequent speech and action may give us some indication of what was in his mind.

In any case, after the disbanding of the Apulian expedition Carmagnola asked his leave of the duke, and it was granted. He retired to the fiefs of Castelnovo and Sale, there to nurse his wrath and brood over vengeance against the court favourites who had upset him; also, maybe, to hatch those schemes of a larger ambition which had been lurking in his mind. For his subsequent conduct in Venetian service seems to



show that he had long dreamed of an independent sovereignty, that goal of every *condottiere's* ambition, though we cannot suppose that either Filippo or his courtiers had any inkling of the fact, even if we admit that it had already taken definite form in Carmagnola's brain. That such was the case, however, seems to be proved by an episode which presently took place and revealed Carmagnola's mind, while it precipitated his flight from the duke.

In October or November of 1424 Brescia sent her envoys to Milan to beg the duke to lighten her burdens. The duke refused to see them, and Carmagnola being then in Milan, the Brescians, who seem to have had a regard for the great general, sought an interview with him. The occasion appears to have come as a relief to Carmagnola; at any rate, he spoke his mind with a frankness that is convincing. He told the Brescians that in his opinion Filippo had lost his senses, that all regard for justice was dead in him; and he urged them to combine with him to shake off the tyrant's yoke as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup> With this startling proposal the Brescians returned to their city.

Carmagnola's advice to the Brescians is at once a revelation of his own designs and declaration of war against Filippo. And it may well have been the suggestion of this attitude which the courtiers whispered in the duke's ear. In any case, the situation between Filippo and his general was now strained to breaking point. Carmagnola had let his secret out, and the duke possibly knew it. Filippo was now on the alert, spreading his toils round his suspected general;

<sup>1</sup> Battistella (*op. cit.* p. 88) accepts this as probable, though confirmatory evidence is wanting. If it be true that Carmagnola already had the lordship of Brescia in his desires, this would have important bearings on his conduct when in Venetian service, and Battistella argues that Brescia was in fact the cause of his treason towards Venice. But if Brescia were already in his mind before he entered Venetian service, then it seems probable that the whole course of his service was tainted with treasonable intention, which is precisely what Battistella denies.

Carmagnola, conscious of his treasonable intent, was in the greatest alarm for his personal safety. On November 29, 1424, he took his resolve. Leaving Sale suddenly, he crossed the Po and made probably for his native town of Carmagnola, where he was under the protection of his "natural sovereign," the Marquis of Saluzzo. There he remained till early in 1425, considering the situation, revolving plans of vengeance on Filippo, and debating the means by which he might still carry his ambitious designs into effect. Clearly that could only be done by taking service with some other power. He at first opened negotiations with the Marquis of Saluzzo, but the marquis prudently refused the offers of the angry soldier. He may have sounded Monferrat, and he certainly approached Amedeo of Savoy, but met with a cold reception. The truth is that none of these princes was strong enough to face the lord of Milan, even with his best general in their service. These negotiations of Carmagnola's were the result of impatience and irritation seeking immediate outlet. With the cooling of his passion his political acumen soon showed him the true quarter where he should offer his services—the Republic of Venice. Venice was the only power in North Italy capable of coping with the Visconti. She was rich, and had already initiated a policy of expansion on the mainland which must inevitably bring her into collision with the ambitious schemes of Filippo Maria. Having made up his mind, Carmagnola set out from Ivrea. He dared not pass through Milanese territory, but took the northern route to Trent and thence by Pergine, the Val Sugana, Feltre, and Treviso. Accompanied by eighty armed attendants, he reached Venice on February 23, 1425.

We are now entering on the last act in Carmagnola's career. Apart from the importance of the historical events—the expansion of Venice on the mainland, and the acquisition of Brescia and Bergamo,

in which Carmagnola played so large a part—the chief interest, as regards the study of this *condottiere's* career, centres now in the character, motives, ambitions, and actions of the three principal actors, Venice, Filippo Maria, and Carmagnola.

The political conditions of Venice were such as to make Carmagnola's arrival peculiarly acceptable. The republic had already begun to take her place as a factor in Italian politics. She had lately acquired a large territory on the mainland, and appeared for the first time as one of the great Italian powers. She found herself now, however, conterminous with Milan, and there were not wanting politicians who insisted upon the danger of the present direction. They pointed out that aggression on the mainland was a course that had no end, and that it exposed the Venetians to that dilemma—so fatal to the princes around them—of attacking or of being attacked; stability and peace would be impossible. And the attitude of Visconti seemed to confirm these warnings. The duke, like his father, cast his eyes towards Tuscany, and would certainly before long strike a blow for Verona, Padua, and the Lombard plain towards Venice and the east. The question before the Republic was, should she assail Milan at once, or hold her hand and wait upon events? The doge, Mocenigo, led the conservative or anti-war party; and as long as he lived that party maintained its policy. But the section of Young Venice was all eager for military enterprise and a land empire. Their moving spirit was Francesco Foscari, still in the prime of a vigorous manhood, and so firmly seated in the affections of the younger nobility that no shadow of his tragic end could possibly have crossed his path. The party of war determined to secure, if possible, the election of their chief to the dukedom. Mocenigo was fully aware that the choice of his successor would prove a critical point in the history of his country. On his death-bed he implored the Senate and council to throw



Foscari aside ; but in vain. The elevation of Foscari to the dukedom virtually gave an affirmative answer to the question of war with Milan. The conservative party were still, however, of considerable weight, and the Republic was certain to move with her wonted caution ; war would be avoided if possible. The new doge was therefore probably not sorry to find his hands strengthened by the arrival of Carmagnola.

The government at once entered into relations with him. Andrea Contarini was deputed to interview and sound the great general, who, playing his cards skilfully, declared that he was ready to stay or to go as the Republic thought best. There could be no doubt which the Republic would think best. It could not afford to let slip the opportunity for securing the services of the victor of Arbedo, the restorer and re-constructor of the Milanese duchy, the very foundation of Filippo Maria's power. The Senate offered to engage him ; the terms, however, were too low for Carmagnola. He formulated and sent in his own terms. They embraced the following heads : (1) the commandership-in-chief ; (2) permanent contract for five hundred lances ; (3) monthly salary of 6,500 ducats ; (4) 30,000 ducats in advance ; (5) a long contract ; (6) absolute jurisdiction over all troops ; (7) prisoners and their personal effects property of the army ; (8) districts, cities, castles, forts with their munitions property of the Republic ; (9) distinguished prisoners or traitors to be consigned to the Republic, on payment of half the reward offered for them, as was customary.<sup>1</sup> The Senate refused to appoint a commander-in-chief, not being at war ; and declared that as to the loan, Carmagnola did not need it. The prisoners must belong to the Republic, not to the army. After some haggling, in course of which Carmagnola declared that it was for the Republic to offer him the title of commander-in-chief rather than for him to ask it, the

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* pp. 101, 102, 103.

contract was signed. Carmagnola retired to Treviso to await events.

The duke was enraged at this engagement of Carmagnola. He had already confiscated all Carmagnola's property. He now complained to the Venetian resident that his troops were being seduced by the late general to serve under Venetian colours, and he further endeavoured to poison Carmagnola at Treviso by means of a Milanese Giovanni degli Aliprandi, and Gerardo da Ruberia, an agent sent from Milan. The plot was discovered, and the accomplices executed. The immediate effect was to sweep away any doubts which might have been lingering in the minds of Venetian politicians as to the advisability of trusting Carmagnola. The breach between him and the duke was evidently complete.

Filippo had miscalculated the strength of the bonds by which he believed that he had bound Carmagnola to himself. He had set cupidity too high, and allowed too low a figure for vanity, pique, and ambition. He had driven his ablest general into the arms of his foes. But Visconti was not the man to abandon his efforts to ruin his enemy. What could not be accomplished by poison might be brought about by the subtler means of a skilful manipulation of circumstances. He would bide his time, and the difficulty would merely enhance the sweetness of success.

Events were clearly marching towards a war between Venice and Milan, as Carmagnola had foreseen. The Florentine question had now reached a crisis and helped to precipitate matters. Filippo Maria, as we know, ever since 1423 had been at war with Florence. On July 28, 1424, his general Angelo della Pergola had inflicted a severe defeat at Zagonara; and now, in October of 1425, Guido Torelli had placed Florence in the gravest danger by his victories of Anghiari and Fagguiola. Florence appealed to Venice, entreating her to form a league against the growing power of the Visconti, which was now a menace to all North Italy.

The question was a crucial one for the Republic. The acceptance of the league meant war with Visconti; the doge Foscari and the war party were strongly in its favour. They had ready to their hand a distinguished general who knew intimately both Filippo's resources and also the probable field of operations, the Bresciano, Bergamasque, Cremonese, where he had won his laurels. Carmagnola was invited to give his opinion in the Senate, it is said.<sup>1</sup>

Carmagnola was under the influence of a blind fury against Filippo, and intent upon exacting some revenge for the slights he had suffered. He was neither cool enough nor, perhaps, sufficiently intelligent to read the situation as it stood. The reception accorded him flattered his vanity, and induced him to believe that he had the power to mould the action of Venice. He did not see that the Republic cared nothing for his private wrongs, but intended to use him for her own purposes if she were once convinced that he was the best man to give them effect. He failed to perceive that if Venice placed him at the head of her armies, she would not be content with such an injury done to the duke as might appease Carmagnola's personal desire for vengeance; but rather that she would require from him nothing short of the destruction of Milan—her only object in this war; and any failure to satisfy her would probably be fatal to himself. Venice differed from the other Signori whom he and his brother mercenaries had served. She was rich, not bankrupt; firmly based, not shivering towards destruction at the slightest shock. Carmagnola's error was that he did not grasp the distinction. He could not hope to inspire her with dread; he might, with greater justice, have mistrusted himself when face to face with her cool diplomacy and determined purpose.

<sup>1</sup> "Hanno avuto in diversi dì due volte gran parlamento . . . col Conte Carmignuola" (*Comm. R. degli Albizzi*, Nov. 1425, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 113).



Carmagnola opened his speech before the Senate with a long and bitter tirade against the perfidy of the Duke of Milan. Then, coming to matters of more practical moment, he depreciated the power of the duke, and insisted that the opportunity was favourable for an extension of Venetian territory. His speech had considerable weight with his audience; and when he had withdrawn, Foscari hastened to clinch the favourable impression. After dwelling on the crisis in Venetian affairs which the question of the Florentine league presented, he continued to enlarge on the necessity and the righteousness of the war, and concluded: "Carmagnola's speech has laid before you the power and the resources of Filippo. They are not so great as rumour has represented them. Nor should we be justified in looking for any other than a happy and prosperous conclusion to our enterprise under Carmagnola as the captain of our arms. For he is versed in war; nor can all Italy show his equal this day in bravery and proficiency in the military art. Under such a general is offered us, beyond all doubt, the certain hope of extending our borders. All these considerations urge us to undertake the war with a good courage; a war, I repeat, which is necessary; for our enemy is powerful, neighbour to us, and aspires to the sovereignty of Italy. Let us embark upon this war, then, and avenge our wrongs by trampling in the dust our common foe, to the everlasting peace of Italy."<sup>1</sup> Foscari carried his audience with him; on December 3, 1425, a league with Florence for ten years was voted, both parties agreeing to take the field in the February of the following year. On the 9th of that month the Senate appointed Carmagnola commander-in-chief, with a salary of 1,000 ducats of gold a month, and further elected two *provveditori* to accompany him on the campaign. On the 15th he received the standard of

<sup>1</sup> See *Cronaca Savina*, *Bib. Marciana*, cl. vii. Ital. cod. cxxxv. p. 259. Quoted by Romanin (*op. cit.*), who thinks the speech authentic.

the Republic with solemn ceremony in the Basilica di San Marco.

It is a tax upon the patience to follow the long-drawn chronicles of Italian campaigning.<sup>1</sup> The slow movement of the armies, the result of the excessive preponderance of the cavalry arm and the difficulty of foddering the horses; the indifference of commanders who had no desire to conclude the war; the formal and technical openings of the game; the marches and countermarches; the avoidance of pitched battles; the lengthened sieges,—all form a wearisome labyrinth through which to toil. The interest of events lies chiefly in the curious contrast between the cabinet and the field; in the feverish impatience of the employers and the sluggish indifference of the employed. The rewards and bribes held out by the government to prick their generals to action were accepted and consumed by the mercenary with irritating imperturbability. It is only necessary for us to dwell on Carmagnola's campaigns in order to mark the conduct of the three principal actors in the drama, and to note the points which bear upon the final and fatal quarrel with Venice.

The campaign of 1426 opened with the siege of Brescia. Carmagnola knew the importance of the place, was aware that there existed great local dissatisfaction with Visconti's government, and, as we have seen, had somewhere in the back of his mind the idea of Brescia as a possible principality for himself. On March 17 the city was assaulted by Pietro Avogadro, a local noble, and the Milanese garrison driven into the citadel. Carmagnola by forced marches arrived on the 20th, secured the city, and laid siege to the castle. But almost immediately afterwards he complained of his health, declared that he was suffering from fever, and begged the Senate, after hearing

<sup>1</sup> See Sanudo, *Vita Ducum*, ap. Murat. *RR. II. SS.* xxii. pp. 983 *et seq.*, and for Carmagnola's campaigns, Battistella's invaluable critical summary.

medical opinion, to allow him to retire to the baths for a cure. They did consult the leading physicians of Venice and Padua, and granted leave.

As this plea of ill-health recurs again and again, to the growing annoyance of the Senate, we may remark that for some obscure reason Carmagnola's constitution did apparently begin to fail during his brief residence at Treviso. Throughout the whole course of his service with Filippo Maria his extraordinary activity and energy precluded the idea of ill-health; but we must remember that he had been wounded in a skirmish in the Bresciano in 1420, and, according to Sabellico, he sustained a severe shock by a fall from his horse<sup>1</sup> when at Treviso, followed by an attack of jaundice which kept him invalided for nearly a month. It is probable, therefore, that Carmagnola's health was really impaired, and that may in part account for the striking difference between his activity in the duke's service and his torpor when in command of Venetian troops. But the Senate as yet entertained no doubts as to the efficiency of their commander-in-chief. Carmagnola seems to have been a full-blooded, thickset, corpulent man. There is a portrait of him in the gallery which connects the Uffizii and the Pitti. It forms part of a series of likenesses of distinguished generals, and is certainly apocryphal, though it agrees in many points with the description of Carmagnola left us by Andrea Morosini. This Florentine portrait shows us Carmagnola in the uniform of captain-general of St. Mark. The face is heavy, with large flabby cheeks, coarse, thick lips, and eyes with a leer of cunning in them. The head is set on a short and massive neck. The countenance lacks distinction. Morosini thus describes him from a portrait extant then: "Ut, ex illius effigie quæ adhuc extat, facile dignoscitur, tetrici

<sup>1</sup> "Pervigli assiduaque jactatione nervorum debilitas, quam, quum Tarvisii esset præcipiti equo devolutus contraxerat, vehementer recruduit, atque ob id ipsum in Patavini agri balnea concedere coactus est" (quoted by Romanin, *op. cit.* iv. 116).



oris, torvi oculi, ingrati propemodum adspectus fuit quæ præferscem animum, conbumax ingenium præ se ferebant." On Carmagnola's return to Venice after his cure the Senate began that long series of promises and allurements by which they hoped to stimulate his action. They were practically aware of the position in which they had placed themselves by employing a captain of adventure ; they expected hints to administer a *douceur* ; nor were they unwilling to obey such calls within reasonable limits. Brescia city was in their hands, and they hoped for the fall of the castle. On May 7 they elected Carmagnola a noble of Venice, with descent to his children and heirs lawfully begotten, and on the 11th they promised him a "nidus," either on this or the other side of the Adda, where he could dwell in honourable state, and all "ut ferventius animetur ad omnia concernentia commodum honorem et statum nostrum."<sup>1</sup>

Thus rewarded, Carmagnola returned to Brescia, where he resumed the supreme command in May, and now began those communications between Filippo Maria and Carmagnola which, unsuspected at first, ended by rousing suspicion in the Senate, and materially contributed to the *condottiere's* disgrace and death. From the very outset it seems that Visconti opened relations with Carmagnola, by means of messengers, agents, released prisoners sent into the Venetian camp. In these early days the most prominent of these emissaries was a certain Valfenario. By their means Filippo informed Carmagnola that he desired to employ him in negotiating for peace with Venice. It is difficult to imagine what other object Filippo had in view, save that of sowing diffidence between the Venetian Senate and their general.<sup>2</sup> His messages to

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* vols. xviii. and xix. I do not know whether *ut ferventius animetur* implies that they thought he was not fervent enough at present.

<sup>2</sup> Sig. Battistella, who is undoubtedly the highest authority on the subject, will not accept this hypothesis, and refuses to find the germs

Carmagnola are continuous throughout all three campaigns, yet he did not really desire peace; he himself informed the Emperor Sigismund later on (July, 1427) that all these negotiations for peace through the instrumentality of Carmagnola were merely ruses. Whether he deliberately intended to ruin Carmagnola by this subtle and novel means, the end was the same and was so advantageous for him that we cannot help believing that his cunning and fertile brain both intended and foresaw it. However that may be, Carmagnola was perfectly frank with his employers. He informed the Senate, who replied at first (May 29) that though they placed little reliance on the duke's word, they were content that Carmagnola should sound the ground and report; advising him at the same time to beware of attempted assassination. But as time went on and the duke's emissaries continued to haunt the camp, we shall see that the tone of the Senate's messages gradually changes, passing through the stages of surprise and annoyance to positive orders, and finally reaching suspicion. Even on June 8 they recommend that Valfenario should be removed from the camp, as he was there to spy, more probably, than to negotiate for peace; and on July 17 they instruct Carmagnola to refuse him a safe-conduct unless he comes with well-defined proposals.

The siege of the forts and castle of Brescia continued during the summer months, chiefly under the direction of the engineer officer Tolentino, who was not on the best of terms with the commander-in-chief on account of his intolerable insolence of tongue.<sup>1</sup> But Carmagnola began again to complain of his health, and through the *provveditori* Malipiero he expressed a wish to go once more to the baths. On September 11 the

of Carmagnola's final crime in these early days of his Venetian service, though he offers no explanation of what must surely have been an unusual procedure. There is no proof beyond the course of events, but that is in favour of the hypothesis.

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 128.

Senate instructed Malipiero to endeavour to dissuade him, on the ground that his presence was essential in camp. Carmagnola consented to remain; but by the beginning of October he declared, through Malipiero, that he was unable to attend to his duties, and begged for twenty days' leave, which was granted. He left Venice again for the camp on November 19, and on the 20th, before he had time to reach Brescia, the castle surrendered, thanks chiefly to the ability and vigour of Gonzaga, who had taken over the supreme command.

The fact that Amedeo of Savoy had at last declared war on Milan and compelled Visconti to divide his forces, coupled with the desperate condition of Brescia, induced Filippo Maria to seek for peace in earnest; and when he is in earnest it is not Carmagnola whom he chooses as his plenipotentiary, but a commission among whom we find Corvini, one of the courtiers who had taken a prominent part in poisoning the mind of the duke against his late general<sup>1</sup>—a fact which goes to corroborate the view that Filippo, when in communication with Carmagnola in camp, was not seriously seeking to open peace negotiations through him, but merely attempting to waken diffidence in the mind of Venice.<sup>2</sup> The pope, too, was anxious to prevent the lowering of Visconti's prestige. He had just received from Filippo, Forlì, Imola, and other places in the Romagna. He accordingly sent Niccolò Albergati, Cardinal of Santa Croce, to Venice. Negotiations for a peace were introduced.

The terms demanded by Venice included the surrender of Brescia and the Bresciano and, more important for our present purpose, the consignment within fifteen days of Carmagnola's wife, children, and property. In spite of some difficulties peace was concluded at San Giorgio Maggiore on December 30, 1426. The duke, after many delays and with great

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* pp. 76, 77.

<sup>2</sup> But if not, what other interpretation will his action bear than the one we have suggested?



reluctance, did fulfil the terms of the peace as far as Carmagnola was concerned, and on January 14, 1427, he surrendered the wife and children of the general to the Cardinal of Santa Croce.

By the peace of San Giorgio Venice had acquired the Bresciano, and she had insisted that the clauses regarding Carmagnola should stand as an integral and vital part of the treaty. Her object clearly was to sever all connection between him and the duke. She succeeded as far as wife, children, and personalty were concerned, but the fiefs and estates were still in the power of the duke, and the person whom Carmagnola appointed to manage them as factor on his behalf was none other than one of Filippo's own officials, a certain Cristoforo Ghilino, treasurer to the duke, of whom we shall hear more as an intermediary between the two. But Venice had made two serious discoveries in the course of this first campaign: first, that her general, owing to ill-health, was not as efficient as he had been when in the service of Visconti; and, secondly, that Filippo insisted on keeping open communications direct with Carmagnola; and though their general acted towards them with perfect frankness, and they at least professed<sup>1</sup> unlimited confidence in his ability and loyalty, still the situation was irregular, and moreover—though it may not have occurred to them then—they could not tell what answers Carmagnola was all this time really sending to the duke. The reiterated expressions of confidence officially conveyed by the Senate to Carmagnola can quite well be accounted for by their fear of offending him—"per tema ch'esso non ne sdegnasse"—which, as they themselves admit, would be highly prejudicial, "allo stato che era intieramente nelle mani di lui"; and by their dread lest he should suddenly leave

<sup>1</sup> Note, however, the phrase of the Council of Ten just before the trial of the count, "dissimulavimus." See Cibrario, "La Morte del C. Carmagnola," in *Opuscoli Storici e Letterarii* (Milano, Visaj: 1835), Documents, p. 63.

their service, as he had left the duke's, carrying with him his knowledge of their resources and their designs. In the following campaign they were to be brought face to face with a third cause for annoyance, alarm, and finally suspicion, the inexplicable inactivity of their general.

But Filippo never intended the peace to be permanent; he was merely temporizing under pressure of events. Even while in the process of negotiating, he begged the Emperor to descend upon Italy and to attack Venice, in which case he pledged himself to take up arms at once, even if the treaty were already signed, on the plea that it had been wrung from him by necessity and against his will. In this spirit he threw difficulties in the way of the Venetian commissioners sent to take over the Bresciano, and Venice soon found herself compelled to request Carmagnola to prepare for a renewal of hostilities which was clearly imminent.

At the conclusion of the peace of San Giorgio Carmagnola had taken up his residence in Brescia, which was powerfully garrisoned, and to Brescia, with the consent of the Senate, he had brought his wife and children. But on March 2, 1427, when war was on the point of breaking out, Carmagnola formally asked leave to retire to the baths of Abano. The Senate, probably on the strength of medical certificates, consented. By the time his cure of twenty days was completed, the war had begun.

The campaign opened with an attack on Casalmaggiore by the duke's fleet on the Po, supported on land by Angelo della Pergola and Piccinino. Fantino Pisani held the place for Venice. The Senate repeatedly urged Carmagnola to take the field—which he had not done even by the end of April—and to succour Casalmaggiore. The commander-in-chief wrote to Venice excusing his delay on the ground that forage was lacking; to which the Senate replied that spring was in and the grass growing daily; that he ought to

relieve Casalmaggiore, as its capture would be a great encouragement to the foe; and they concluded with the formula which they adopted during their early dealings with Carmagnola—namely, that they merely expressed their hopes and wishes, but left the conduct of the war to him with a perfectly free hand. Pisani meanwhile from inside the besieged city sent to beg aid from Carmagnola; but he did not move, though he was quite close, and had at his disposal 16,000 horse and 6,000 foot, and thus Casalmaggiore fell.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever they may have thought—and we do not know that they thought other than they wrote—the Senate made no reproaches for the loss of Casalmaggiore. They informed the general that they were attending with all zeal to his demand for biscuits and money, and once again urged him to take the field. They were cheered by Contarini's and Bembo's signal victory over Pasino Eustacchio and the duke's fleet on the Po, which led to the recovery of Casalmaggiore on July 5.

Meantime Carmagnola had at length taken the field, and, in spite of a defeat at Gottolengo, the result of his over-confidence, he proceeded to sweep the Bresciano, crossed the Oglio into the Cremonese, and proposed to cross the Adda. The Senate wrote to him in terms of warm approval, and begged him to keep them informed of his needs. They suggested that it might be wiser to take Pizzighettone before crossing the Adda, so as to secure a free passage, but left the decision to his judgment, merely adding that, for the honour of the state and the safety of the

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 154, "Giacchè era tanto vicino"; p. 155, "Carmagnola, il quale, o non potesse, o indugiasse troppo." Sig. Battistella will not hear of "guilt," though he admits "soverchia lentezza," which in a general has been held to amount to "guilt." He pleads, as extenuating circumstance, that Carmagnola probably had not his whole army in perfect order. But the Senate had already pointed out that his forces were sufficient to relieve Casalmaggiore—an operation which they had much at heart.



places already taken, he was not to retire into the Bresciano.<sup>1</sup>

Carmagnola was now at the head of an army of 22,000 horse and 14,000 foot—"Quo maggior memoria mea exercitus in Italia non erat visus";<sup>2</sup> the duke's troops numbered about the same. But Carmagnola neither crossed the Adda, as he himself proposed, nor attacked Pizzighettone, as the Senate wished. He cantoned his army in a camp protected by a laager of waggons. Filippo was seriously alarmed for the safety of Cremona, and in June he appeared in that city in person to animate his generals della Pergola, Torelli, and Sforza. Under this stimulus they attacked Carmagnola's camp on July 12, forced the laager, and penetrated to the interior; but the troops of the league, when they had recovered from the shock, delivered a counter-attack and drove the enemy back to the gates of Cremona, which might have been stormed had not Carmagnola sounded the retreat. Whether he was justified or not from the military point of view we cannot say. The league lost the opportunity of seizing the city; but the Senate made no comment, as far as we know. The action near Cremona was followed by another fierce though indecisive engagement before Pizzighettone on July 30. Early in August, for reasons unexplained, but clearly in disobedience to the express wish of the Senate,<sup>3</sup> Carmagnola retired to Pralboino in the Bresciano, just across the Quetta. It would seem that the Senate resented this action, and proposed to write to their general in that sense, but finally resolved to wait, in the hope that Carmagnola would still give them proof of his ability and justify their confidence and reward their patience. Again this looks very much as if the Senate were afraid of their general, and

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 162, July 2.

<sup>2</sup> Fazio, *De viris illust.*, p. 63, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 162, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See letter of July 2.

dared not speak their mind, lest he should suddenly leave their service as he had left the duke's. But their displeasure was heightened when news reached them from the camp that, although it was only early September, and hardly anything of note had been achieved as yet, Carmagnola was actually talking of going into winter quarters. The Senate at once ordered the *provveditori* to say that they felt both surprise and pain at such a proposal; the enemy had kept the field the preceding year till the end of November, and the like was now expected from Carmagnola. Hitherto his retreat into the Bresciano had merely given the enemy an opportunity for concentrating; moreover, they were sorry to add that disparaging criticism as to the conduct of the war had reached their ears. As to the liberation of prisoners, they objected to it as long as the duke continued to keep Venetian prisoners. On September 7 the Senate despatched Jacopo Barbarigo with a still sharper message: if the general could not undo the past, he must take care not to lose more time. It is clear that there is a serious change of tone. The Senate is annoyed and disappointed and on the way to growing angry, and they had good cause. For in August Amedeo of Savoy had declared war on Milan, and Filippo Maria found himself attacked on the west, yet Carmagnola, lying idle on his eastern borders, took no advantage of the favourable opportunity. Indeed, during this whole campaign Filippo had been pursuing his policy of keeping up communications with the enemy's general. His emissaries were constantly in the Venetian camp. On July 3 Carmagnola informed the Senate that a certain Paolo della Melara, a soldier of the league who had been made prisoner by the duke, had reached his quarters, with a letter, which he enclosed. The Senate replied that he should send Melara back to Filippo to say that his proposals were unacceptable, and that if he had anything reasonable to suggest, he should send it through Carmagnola, who would report home.

They warned their commander to beware of attempts at assassination. Filippo was certainly not in earnest. Whether he was deliberately endeavouring to sow the seeds of suspicion against Carmagnola in the minds of the Senate, his action could hardly fail of that effect. In any case, rumours reached Carmagnola's ears that the government was dissatisfied. He professed indignation. The government at once sent Andrea Morosini to pacify him and to say that in a free state such as Venice men's tongues would wag, but that the general should only give heed to what the government itself said to him. They renewed to him their protestations of confidence and satisfaction with his operations. At the same time they sent a private reprimand to the *provveditori*, who apparently had been criticising Carmagnola, pointing out how dangerous it was to offend the general who held the safety of the state entirely in his hands, and ordering them to abstain from all comments, even if justified<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> *Senato Secreto, Deliberazioni*, reg. x. fol. 91, Oct. 6, 1427.

COMMISSION TO ANDREA MOROSINI

"Volumus quod dicas illis nostris provisoribus Brixie inter te et eos quod ad notitiam nostram devenit quod ipsi ambo seu alter eorum in publico et aliter dixerunt et locuti sunt aliqua in onus et dedecus Magnifici Capitani Generalis cui talia reportata sunt de quibus habuit et habet cordialissimam displicentiam et gravem molestiam in animo suo, et si sic est valde miramur et gravamur de eis qui sunt sapientissimi et cognoscunt et intelligunt quid important talia verba et oblocutiones et quantum possent esse nocive et periculose factis nostris habente ipso Magnifico Capitano Generali statum nostrum in manibus et ideo eis strictissime mandamus quatenus (?) se abstineant a talibus et habeant bonam advertentiam et considerationem ad non proferendum aliqua verba que aliquo modo possint esse contra honorem prefati Magnifici Capitani Generalis qui etiam si vera forent non deberent dici propter respectus et causas supra scriptas.

I quote the passage in full, as Sig. Battistella only refers to it. The words *etiam si vera forent*, coupled with the remark *non deberent dici propter respectus et causas suprascriptas*—that is, the dread of alarming the general who has *statum nostrum in manibus*—seem to me to indicate both suspicion and fear; at least they are hardly compatible with an attitude of perfect trust and confidence.



a significant phrase indicating the presence of a suspicion which had to be suppressed for fear of alienating the general.

Carmagnola had meantime been explaining to the Senate that he could not keep his companies from slipping into winter quarters—many of them had been accustomed to do so under King Ladislas even in the month of August; besides, he had not money enough to pay them. The Senate told Morosini to insist on the recall of troops from quarters, and to say that the precedent of Ladislas did not affect them; they were thinking of the duke's forces, which were still in the field in full strength. For pay they sent 32,000 ducats.

At last Carmagnola made up his mind to act with some vigour. The fall of Montechiari, which he had been besieging, set him free, and he moved at once against the duke's forces under Carlo Malatesta at Maclo dio. On October 12 he won a great victory entirely by superior generalship. The enemy was vigorously pursued till two hours after sundown. Between six and eight thousand prisoners fell into his hands and the ducal forces were crumpled up.<sup>1</sup>

There were great rejoicings in Venice, and the republic at once gave their victorious general the palace of Pandolfo Malatesta at San Stae and the fief of Castenedolo in the Bresciano, worth 500 ducats a year. The Senate admit that the reward was small, but promised larger recompense if, thanks to his action, their affairs continued to prosper. And in fact the gifts bestowed by the republic are not to be compared with those which Filippo Maria had showered on the *condottiere*, but, on the other hand, his services to Venice fell far short of those he rendered to the duke.

<sup>1</sup> As to the famous question of the liberation of the prisoners, which has always been alleged as one of the Senate's grievances against Carmagnola, the arguments of Romanin (*op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 125) and Battistella (*op. cit.* pp. 192, 202) make it doubtful whether they were in fact liberated by Carmagnola. Any way, there is no word of blame in the Venetian documents.

Venice expected much from the victory of Maclodio. To her it seemed that the road now lay open to Milan and the Milanese, the *cor et caput* of Visconti power. But that was hardly the case. The victory, though brilliant, was far from being decisive. Filippo, though he admits heavy losses to Sigismund, could still dispose of considerable forces. Of his generals only Carlo Malatesta, the least competent, had been taken prisoner; he still had Piccinino, Torelli, and Sforza. The winter too was coming on, the country was swampy and difficult for cavalry operations. On the other hand, the opinion is strongly expressed by most of the authorities that, in the words of the anonymous chronicle edited by Porro, "there was not the smallest doubt Filippo could have been stripped of all his territory then and there had Carmagnola kept the prisoners who were the flower of the duke's army. Nothing could have saved him if Carmagnola had followed up his victory and entered Cremona. Such was the terror in men's minds and so exaggerated was the fame of the victory that the general could have laid siege to Cremona, and when it had fallen he could have camped under Milan."

But Venice was doomed to disappointment. Instead of striking at Milan, Carmagnola, who possibly did not wish to see the duke reduced to desperate straits,<sup>1</sup> confined himself to some unimportant operations in the Bresciano, and presently had to inform the Senate that his captains were going into winter quarters of themselves. After various letters of protest the advanced period of the season brought operations to a close.

Meantime negotiations for peace had been reopened, again through the good offices of Cardinal of Santa Croce. After some delay the plenipotentiaries met at Ferrara, and while the congress was sitting, Filippo again employed Valfenario as a means for communicating with Carmagnola, and, as usual, the

<sup>1</sup> Animirato "increscendoli e avendo compassione, second mi va per l'animo, della miseria del duca," quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 206.

general informed the Senate and received the stereotyped reply that Filippo was merely trifling with him. Negotiations were still proceeding slowly and with difficulty at Ferrara, when Carmagnola applied for leave to go to the baths. This was granted. On his way through Venice he was received with every mark of honour and esteem.

In the congress at Ferrara, as far as Carmagnola was concerned, the chief point lay in the Venetian demand that he should be allowed to retain his Milanese fiefs without their feudal obligation. This the duke strenuously refused to grant. Venice clearly aimed at severing the last bond between Filippo and Carmagnola, while the duke was equally determined to retain a hold over the great *condottiere* whom the shifting fortunes of mercenary service might bring to his side once again. Venice insisted, and Filippo at length gave way up to a certain point: he consented that Carmagnola should retain the title of Count of Castelnovo, but at the same time should be personally free from all obligation towards his feudal superior. In the course of these negotiations Carmagnola had declared to the Venetian government that, as far as he was concerned, no one but the Republic should be recognized as superior in any dominion held by him, and begged them not to allow considerations for his convenience to hinder the conclusion of peace. For this generosity the Senate voted him public thanks. Peace was signed on April 19, 1428. Visconti showed great reluctance to acknowledge the personal independence of Carmagnola, but after a threat that war might be renewed, he finally gave way.

Visconti, however, never meant the peace to be permanent. On May 30 he again told the emperor that it was wrung from him by necessity, implying that he felt himself at liberty to break it. He delayed as far as possible the consignment of the Bergamasque, which, by the treaty of Ferrara, had become Venetian territory. But eventually all the terms were carried out, and Carmagnola and his generals came to Venice for the



solemn reconsignment of the standard of San Marco. The Senate delayed its rewards to the commander-in-chief until it had, as it declared, sounded his wishes and intentions—a phrase which hardly indicates confidence in Carmagnola's future conduct.

The peace lasted two years, during which time Carmagnola was resident in the Bresciano. With significant persistence Filippo continued his correspondence directly with his late commander-in-chief, in spite of the fact that war had ceased. He set himself to conciliate the general and to remove all cause of suspicion and distrust. The count was relieved of the penalties pronounced against him and was restored to the position he had held in the Milanese before he fled from it.

Carmagnola kept the Senate informed, and it is impossible to believe that they did not view with suspicion such a correspondence. At the very least there was the obvious danger that they might lose Carmagnola's services at the close of his contract. On January 5, 1429, the Council of Ten declared its competence to take the affairs of the count into consideration, but resolved to refer the matter to the Senate. This intervention of the Ten would indicate that the conduct of the count was considered a question of public safety.

As a matter of fact, early in January, Carmagnola had asked leave to surrender his appointment. Taken in connection with his known correspondence with the duke, the government naturally concluded that he intended to pass over into Filippo's service. The Senate refused, and after some insistence on both sides, on February 15, 1429, a new contract was signed. Carmagnola was reappointed commander-in-chief; he was granted civil and criminal jurisdiction over the forces, except in places where a Venetian governor resided; his own *condotta* of 500 lances was at his sole disposition; and his pay was to be 1,000 ducats a month for two years. The Republic invested

him in the fief of Chiari, worth 6,000 ducats a year.

This new contract with Venice seems to have angered Filippo Maria. It delayed his hopes of winning Carmagnola back to his service. When the count applied for leave to go to the baths near Siena, the government warned him that they had it from a sure source that the duke intended some mischief against his person, and begged him to choose Abano. He declined and stood by his original intention, though his personal guard amounted to 300 foot and 60 horse.

After the completion of his cure he returned to Chiari, his fief in the Bresciano, and was almost immediately interviewed by an agent from the duke, Cristoforo Ghilino, the duke's inspector of revenues and also, it must be noted, Carmagnola's factor for his Milanese estates. And this policy of sending emissaries to Carmagnola was kept up with increasing activity all through the months of January and February, 1430. In March the count went to Venice with a letter from Visconti in his pocket. After consultation the Senate requested Carmagnola to give the duke clearly to understand that he must desist from all further correspondence; Filippo, of course, paid no heed.

War was coming on again. The duke continued to harass Monferrat, and the Republic now declared that she would consider such conduct a *casus belli*. In August Carmagnola was summoned to Venice to consult, and he then asked for a part of the Milanese if it fell to Venetian arms. The Senate promised him any city he chose and its territory except Milan itself, and the full restitution of all his fiefs in the Milanese; and letters patent were issued to that effect. It had by this time become clear to the Senate that Carmagnola's ambition was to create an independent principality for himself, an ambition common to most of his brother *condottieri*, and from this point onwards they endeavoured to stimulate him to action by increasing the value of the prize they offered.

Early in 1431 hostilities broke out. This last campaign of Carmagnola presents the same features as its two predecessors, only in a heightened degree: the same inexplicable inactivity and sluggishness; the same demand to close the campaign in August; the same persistent communications from the duke; the same official professions of confidence, coupled with a growing discontent in public opinion and irritation tending towards suspicion in the mind of the Senate. The campaign opened with an attack on Lodi, in which Carmagnola failed, and a reverse at Soncino, where he allowed himself to be entrapped. On May 30 the standard of San Marco was solemnly consigned to him in the Duomo of Brescia, and he took the field in force.

It is needless for us to follow the details of this campaign. It will suffice if we dwell briefly on the various points which were afterwards brought up against Carmagnola as proofs of a treacherous intention.

On June 22, after a reconnaissance, carried out the evening before by Pasino Eustacchio and Giovanni Grimaldi, the duke's admirals on the Po, Nicolò Trevisan, the Venetian commander, apparently on the positive orders of Carmagnola,<sup>1</sup> who was his superior officer,<sup>2</sup> moved up the river to attack the enemy. The current was against him, his men were tired with rowing before the engagement began; his ships for the same reason failed to keep their stations, while the enemy, with a favourable current, bore down on him in perfect order. His fleet was gradually pushed over to the right bank of the stream, the bank opposite to that on which Carmagnola's army was stationed; the result was a crushing defeat. Carmagnola's forces must have been quite close, for

<sup>1</sup> "Vista la presente (lettera) el dovesse andar con l'armada suxo." Orders sent by Carmagnola to Trevisan on the night of June 21-22, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 278.



the din of battle was heard in the camp. Trevisan, when he found himself hard pressed, repeatedly sent to beg for instant succour, and Paolo Correr, the *provveditore* with the general, "on hearing the guns and seeing the ducal galleons bearing down, told Carmagnola that he ought either to attack Cremona (by way of causing a diversion) or to march down to the banks of the Po to support the doge's fleet, which had come up the river on his orders"; and the chronicler adds, "Carmagnola looked annoyed; said he would take steps; *e nulla fece*." It is possible that in fact he could not do anything, owing to the position assumed by the fleets; yet the impression is left that he wilfully made absolutely no effort to support Trevisan.<sup>1</sup> Carmagnola thought it necessary to write to Venice to defend his conduct—the first time he ever did so. In his own support he sent in copies of his orders to Trevisan. The Senate replied that no excuse was called for; that they knew where the blame lay. And, as a matter of fact, they passed a heavy sentence on Trevisan—a sentence that was reduced but not quashed after Carmagnola's trial.

The defeat on the Po upset the whole plan of campaign. The discussion of future operations led to a difference of opinion between the commander-in-chief and the *provveditore*, Correr; the Senate, when appealed to, supported the general. But Carmagnola did hardly anything of note,<sup>2</sup> and presently the Senate were amazed by receiving notice that the campaign must close at the end of August. It is to be observed that contemporaneously with this notice from Carmagnola, Filippo Maria believed himself in a position to withdraw Piccinino and his troops from the field of operations.<sup>3</sup> On August 14 the Senate replied

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 289, is of opinion that Carmagnola's action was the first step on the perilous road of treachery.

<sup>2</sup> Battistella (p. 292) notes the *strana lentezza* of the general.

<sup>3</sup> Possevin, quoted by Battistella (p. 296, note 3), says distinctly that Filippo counted on Carmagnola's treacherous retirement into quarters.

expressing their "great displeasure," and immediately afterwards they sent two commissioners to the camp to dissuade the general from abandoning active operations, and also with orders to investigate the reasons adduced by Carmagnola. This order to investigate, given now for the first time, is significant, and indicates great dissatisfaction if not actual suspicion. The Senate further remarked that there was too marked a difference between the activity of the duke's generals and their own. Did not the duke's cavalry require forage as well as theirs? and yet he kept the field till late in winter.

This was followed on September 4 by positive orders—the first time we hear of them—that the general was to keep the field. But all in vain. At the beginning of October he cantoned the larger part of his troops. The patience of Venice was running out, and we are approaching the crisis. On October 9 motion was made in the Senate to take into consideration the affairs of the count. Deliberation was suspended for a few days, but on the 13th it was moved "that in order to know where we are, *et non stare in his perpetuis laboribus et expensis*," on Monday following the Senate should express its opinion on the matter. This was passed, but was immediately followed by a vote to suspend action for the present. The Senate, possibly in the absence of convincing proof of guilt, resolved to return yet again to its old policy of endeavouring to stimulate its general by promises of large rewards. Events, however, were shortly to compel them to abandon this tentative attitude and to force them into sharp and vigorous action.

On October 17 Cavalcabò, one of Carmagnola's officers, made a bold attempt to seize Cremona. By a well-planned escalade in the night-time he captured the gate and fort of San Luca. Carmagnola was only three miles off, and though repeatedly asked to support Cavalcabò, he either did not move or

arrived too late, and the attempt failed. News reached Venice that Cremona was in their hands, but a second despatch dashed the universal joy and gave cause for bitter disappointment and indignation.<sup>1</sup>

With the failure to capture Cremona the inglorious campaign of 1431 came to an end. Carmagnola had done nothing save to rouse anger and possibly the suspicion of his employer. Venice had gained nothing, in spite of her great army of thirty thousand men in the field. Her purse and her patience were alike all but exhausted.

Meanwhile the duke's emissaries continued to reach Carmagnola in his quarters at Brescia. On November 3 he informed the Senate that Daniele da Imola had brought him an offer from the duke to name him plenipotentiary for peace negotiations. Apparently no notice was taken of this, because Carmagnola was suddenly called on to undertake the command of operations against the Hungarians in Friuli. The enemy, however, retired before his arrival. In December a motion was brought forward to instruct the governors of Brescia to sound Carmagnola as to the real objects of his ambition. The Senate say that they have heard that he aspired to the lordship of Milan; should this prove to be the case, then the governors, in the name of the Republic, are to give him a promise that Milan shall be his should he succeed in taking it. The motion was not carried, and though it was repeated in January, 1432, it met the same fate. But the episode is important. It shows us the Senate still endeavouring to overcome their general's inactivity by holding out the prospect of vast prizes; it also indicates that such a policy had ceased to recommend itself to the majority; and it throws light on Carmagnola's private aims and desires, the creation of an independent principality.

<sup>1</sup> Battistella (p. 308) here admits a second case of treacherous conduct: "Egli arrivò tardi perchè tardi volle arrivare." But on the point there is no documentary evidence.



While matters were in this state Carmagnola, in February, 1432, informed the Senate that Cristoforo Ghilino had sent him fresh messages from the duke. The Senate replied on the 21st, absolutely forbidding him to answer these or any other messages. Carmagnola's only response was to tell the Senate that Ghilino still insisted on an interview. The Senate repeated the order not to receive Ghilino, and informed the general that all negotiations for peace were now transferred to plenipotentiaries at Ferrara. If we are to accept the statement of Giulio Porro, these orders were disobeyed. Carmagnola on one occasion did receive a ducal emissary in his tent by night, and on another occasion he passed beyond the lines to confer with agents from Filippo.<sup>1</sup> But worse was still to follow. In striking contrast with Carmagnola's inactivity, the ducal troops under Piccinino vigorously assumed the offensive, and in February easily recovered Casalmaggiore, Toricella, Casalbutano, and Bordelano—the last-named is said to have surrendered on the positive instigation of Carmagnola himself.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he deliberately threw away an opportunity for capturing Soncino, a large part of whose walls had collapsed. The war, in short, was going from bad to worse, and Venice could stand it no longer; she had exercised a patience that no other state would have displayed, but when this was exhausted, she acted rapidly and without hesitation.

On March 27, 1432, the Council of Ten took the matter in hand, and resolved that in view of previous

<sup>1</sup> Porro says he read these facts in the reports of the *provveditori*, in the archives at Venice. These papers cannot now be found; and Battistella conjectures that Porro is really referring to the documents of the Senate. Battistella (*op. cit.* p. 334) declares that it was not permissible for Carmagnola to negotiate with the enemy on the subject of peace. But if not then, why earlier, when Battistella will not admit guilt or blame? The situation and the facts are the same; the Senate's interpretation of them only had changed owing to accumulation.

<sup>2</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 337.

and recent information, the governors of Brescia should be ordered to arrest Carmagnola immediately.<sup>1</sup> This proposal, however, presented dangers. All along the government had been in dread lest Carmagnola should leave their service and return to the duke; this dread accounts for the conciliatory tone of the senatorial communications, and for the reiterated expressions of confidence, which certainly contributed to blind Carmagnola to the perils of his position. Carmagnola at Brescia was in the midst of his troops, surrounded by his personal bodyguard and comparatively close to the duke's territories. There was considerable risk that he might escape. The matter was deferred till the following day, and meantime the usual Giunta (*Zonta*) of twenty nobles was elected, as in cases of great gravity. It was further proposed that the Senate should be kept sitting in permanence till the Ten had reached a resolution, but this was modified to the administration of the oath of secrecy as regards the letters read in Senate and as regards the convocation of the Ten with the *Zonta*.<sup>2</sup> This shows that the information on which they were acting had been communicated first to the Senate, and that it was the Senate who had set the Ten in motion.

On March 29 the Ten despatched their secretary, Giovanni de Imperiis, to Brescia, with an invitation to Carmagnola to come to Venice that they might consult on the operations of the spring; upon the doubts and difficulties connected therewith they enlarge, with a view to concealing their real intent. The secretary is also to say that they have invited the Marquis of Mantua to meet the general. Carmagnola

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 339 and doc. xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> The documents are quoted by Cibrario, *op. cit.* pp. 53-72. "Quod consilium rogatorum licentietur sed mandetur omnibus sub pena haveris et persone quod teneant secretas litteras in dicto consilio et similiter convocatum huius consilii de Decem ac additionem datam dicto consilio." The first *dicto* refers to the Senate, the second *dicto* to the Ten.

is begged to come as soon as possible. If Giovanni succeeds in persuading the count to set out, he is to accompany him and advise the Ten of the day of arrival; should the general, however, show signs of refusal, Giovanni, in order to allay suspicion, is to say that he will take the count's views and forward them home, but he is secretly to convey orders to the governors to arrest Carmagnola and his wife, and to sequester all letters, papers, and money, of which an inventory is to be drawn up. On his arrival at Venice the count is to be arrested forthwith. It was further resolved, in view of Carmagnola's possible escape on the road to Venice, that all the officials along the route should be ordered to seize him if he made the attempt. Letters were directed to all general officers in Venetian service to explain the arrest of Carmagnola, and absolute silence was imposed on the members of the Ten, they being forbidden to discuss the matter, even among themselves, outside the council chamber. The brief letter to the count himself, begging him to give the secretary *fidem plenariam tanquam nobis propriis*, was then drafted, and with it and his instructions Giovanni de Imperiis set out for Brescia. He seems to have found no difficulty in persuading Carmagnola to come to Venice. On April 6 he set out apparently with a perfectly clear conscience; at least he showed no disposition to refuse or to escape, as the Ten had conjectured that he might. As a sign of the highest regard, the Governors of Brescia escorted him on the road till they met the escort despatched from Verona, and so on from city to city till he reached the lagoons. Carmagnola took it all in good faith and<sup>1</sup> never suspected that he was really a prisoner. On the night of the 6th he slept in the palace of the Venetian official Federico Contarini. Next day he was brought down the Brenta to the lagoons,<sup>1</sup> and on landing in Venice he

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. di Stato*, Collegio Notatorio, reg. 8, 1424-39, fol. 109, "solvuntur pro tribus barchis missis obviam Comiti, l. 11, soldi 16."



was met by eight nobles, who at once conducted him to the ducal palace. His escort was dismissed while he went upstairs. Presently he was told that the doge was indisposed, but would receive him the next day. He turned and went downstairs; but as he passed along the lower arcade, out of which the prisons opened, one of the gentlemen about him said, "This way, if you please, my lord count." "But that is not the way," replied Carmagnola. "Pardon, it is the right way," and at that moment he was hurried into prison. As the door closed on him he exclaimed, "I am a lost man."

On the same day, April 7, after the arrest, notice was given to the Governors of Brescia and to Fantino Michiel and Paolo Correr, envoys at Ferrara. These letters contain the statement of the Ten as to the cause of the arrest, and we shall deal with them when discussing the nature of Carmagnola's guilt. Further, orders were sent to Dandolo Garzoni, *provveditore* at Brescia, to proceed at once to Carmagnola's fief of Chiari and to take it over in the name of the Republic; the oath of fidelity was to be exacted from the troops under Carmagnola's immediate personal command. Both these orders were carried out without the smallest opposition. Carmagnola's horses, which he had left behind in Padua, were also sequestered.

On the 8th the Senate, not the Ten, wrote to their envoy at Florence, Ermolao Donato, giving the reasons for the action taken against Carmagnola, the grounds being that under his command "*nihil factum fuit nec fieri voluit contra inimicum*," and further "*cum eis intelligentiam habuit ducendo sub simulationem rem in longum et querendo subvertere statum nostrum sicut clare detectum est*."<sup>1</sup>

On the 9th the trial began. It was a strictly legal trial, following meticulously the prescribed procedure (*rito*) of the Ten. A commission of eight members

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op cit.* iv. p. 159, note 1.

was elected from among the Ten to draw up the charges against the count and to report, and was empowered to use torture in their examination of Carmagnola, of his chancellor, Giovanni de Moris, or any other who might seem to have had art or part in the proceedings of the general. Among those arrested and sent to Venice from Brescia were a woman known as "la Bella," and the count's household servants. The countess was also brought to Venice, along with all Carmagnola's correspondence.

The commission at once proceeded to their task. Carmagnola was examined under torture<sup>1</sup> of fire applied to his feet, his injured arm preventing the application of the cord. He confessed "at once," and his confession was committed to writing and read over to him. What it contained we do not know. The document has disappeared. On the 11th Holy Week began, and the trial was suspended. It was resumed on the 23rd, and to make up for lost time the commission was ordered to sit day and night. The count's correspondence was examined. What was found in it we do not gather from official documents; but a large number of the better authorities, including Sanudo, the anonymous chronicle edited by Porro, S. Antonino, and others, are agreed that compromising letters and papers were discovered. It is pretty certain that the countess, "la Bella," the servants, and an officer called Moccino da Lugo were also heard as witnesses. We do not know precisely what evidence they gave; Moccino's must have been hostile, if we can trust the passage in Spino's *Life of Colleoni*:<sup>2</sup> "E per lettere di sua mano e pel testimonio de Moccino, rimanendo convinto." The trial was concluded by May 5, and on that day the commission submitted the minutes to the

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. di Stato*, Collegio Notatorio, *loc. cit.* "solvuntur magistro torture qui venit de padua," l. 2, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoria della vita, di Bartolomeo Colleoni, da Pietro Spino* (Bergamo: 1732), p. 29. Moccino was present at Cavalcabò's surprise attack on Cremona, and probably gave evidence on this point.

Ten and the Giunta. These were read, and then, in accordance with the usage of the court, the three chiefs of the Ten moved that "on account of what has just been read and said, we do now proceed against Count Francesco called Carmagnola, late our commander-in-chief, for his actions which were prejudicial to our state, and as a public traitor." This was carried by twenty-six votes against one, with nine neutrals. Motion was then made "that on that very day, at the usual hour after nones, Carmagnola, a traitor to the state, should be led, with a gag in his mouth and his hands tied behind his back, to the midst of the two columns on the Piazza di San Marco, and that there his head should be struck off so that he die. The sentence to be notified at once to the prisoner."<sup>1</sup> This was carried by nineteen votes. The doge, Foscari, and three councillors moved that perpetual imprisonment be substituted for death, but the amendment was lost. That same evening before vespers, Carmagnola, splendidly dressed in scarlet stockings, a velvet cap *alla Carmagnola*, doublet of crimson and cloak of scarlet, was led to the place of execution, where his head fell at the third blow. His body, accompanied by twenty-four torches, was taken first to the Church of San Francesco della Vigna, but while the interment was in progress the monk Dolfin, who had confessed him, came to say that the count desired to be buried at the Frari. Thither the body was at once conveyed, and buried in the first cloister against the wall of the church under the portico.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The same motion made sufficient provision for his wife and children.

<sup>2</sup> The body was subsequently removed by consent to the Church of San Francesco at Milan, where Carmagnola had raised a marble tomb for himself and his family in 1431. This church was destroyed in 1798 to make way for barracks; it is probable that the body of Carmagnola disappeared then. There was a tradition that the count's head was placed in an urn above the door leading to the cloisters of the Frari. In February, 1874, this urn was opened, and not only a head, but a whole body was found; but the vertebræ of the neck had not been severed, so that it could not be the body of Carmagnola.



The execution of Carmagnola attracted considerable attention at the time, and the question of his innocence or guilt has divided historians into two camps. As far as we can gather, contemporary and subsequent Italian opinion justified the action of Venice. It is true that at Florence "la prexa et la morte del Carmagnola è ogni dì più vituperata et biasimata qui,"<sup>1</sup> as a certain Gerardini writes on May 15, 1432, to the Marquis Niccolò d'Este, but he lets us see the true reason for this condemnation, not the belief in the injustice of the act, but a consideration of the harm it would do to the Veneto-Florentine league; Louis Helian, too, ambassador of France, when addressing the Imperial Diet in 1510, at the time of the league of Cambray, cites, in his long charge against Venice, the execution of Carmagnola, but his attitude is sufficiently explained by his mission and his period. On the other hand, the opinion of Carmagnola's brother officers, Gonzaga, Orsini, Colleoni, and Moccino is against him. Macchiavelli admits his sluggishness and the suspicion it aroused, and concludes that as Venice could not stimulate him to action and dared not part with him, there was only one course open to her, and that she took. Girolamo Riario, nephew of Sixtus IV., is said to have remarked in 1480, "Il Carmagnola li aveva ingannati e meritamente ne pagò la pena."<sup>2</sup> But when we come to the opening of the nineteenth century the attacks on Venice and the assertion of Carmagnola's innocence are renewed with great vigour by many writers, notably by Manzoni and Cibrario.

We must endeavour to define the nature of Carmagnola's guilt, about which it seems to us there can be no doubt, and to discover, if possible, what was the precise charge upon which he was tried and condemned, for this does not emerge from the documents;

<sup>1</sup> Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzi, *Cola Montano*, p. 85, quoted by Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 373.

in them Carmagnola is called *publicus proditor*, but they do not say in what the treason consisted. It is true they state as the motive for the sentence "ea que fecit et tractavit in damnum et prejudicium negotiorum nostrorum," but again they do not say what these "actions" and "dealings" were; they speak of "certæ importantissimæ et justissimæ causæ," but that is still a vague phrase. The most definite statement is to be found in the despatch of the Senate to Ermolao Donato, envoy at Florence, dated April 8, 1432, "Nam nil factum fuit nec fieri voluit contra inimicum ligæ nostræ. . . . Ymo cum eis intelligentiam habuit ducendo sub simulationem rem in longum."<sup>1</sup>

It may assist our inquiry if we examine the relations between Carmagnola and the Venetian government under two distinct periods, the first covering the three wars with the Duke of Milan, during which Carmagnola was in touch with the Senate or its committee of a hundred appointed for the conduct of the first war: the second period, dating from the intervention of the Council of Ten down to the end. During the first period the points of Carmagnola's conduct which stand out with greatest prominence, the points upon which the Republic appears to have had plausible grounds for complaint, are the general's health, his inactivity, and his communications with the duke.

That his health was really compromised seems clear. We know that he had been wounded in the neck, that he had received an injury to his arm so serious that the court which tried him refrained from applying the torture of the cord, that a severe fall from his horse shook his nervous system, and that a long attack of jaundice kept him an invalid for a month. The government had not realized all this when it engaged the services of Carmagnola. He had come fresh from his operations on behalf of the duke, where his energy had been striking. The contrast was exasperating to the

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* iv. p. 159, note 1.

Republic, and though due to no fault on the part of Carmagnola, can hardly be left out of account in considering the attitude of Venice towards her general.

As to his persistent inactivity, his "strana" and "inespliable lentezza," here again his conduct in the duke's and in Venetian service presents a striking contrast. How far was it culpable, and when did it begin to rouse suspicion in the Senate? The fact of his inactivity is not denied, though more or less plausible explanations, his natural caution, want of forage, rainy seasons, have been put forward by his defenders.

Two considerations may perhaps be advanced in palliation: first, his ill-health, which sapped his energy, brilliancy, *élan*, as a commander; secondly, that his reputation as a general was possibly above his merits. We must remember that his achievements for the duke were not entirely due to military skill, that bribery played a large part; that in his purely military operations he was confronted by a number of small princes, not firmly welded together, and that he could and did deal with them one by one, whereas when in Venetian service he was face to face with the compact forces of Visconti, and pitted against generals of the calibre of Piccinino and Sforza and Angelo della Pergola; that, however brilliant the victory of Arbedo, Carmagnola has to share the glory with della Pergola.

But the gravamen against Carmagnola on this point of inactivity lies in the undoubted fact that his various campaigns show a crescendo of this defect, till it amounts to a dereliction of duty which in any country would have led to recall, if not to a court-martial.<sup>1</sup> But Venice could not cashier a mercenary general for fear of seeing him join the enemy. She

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Byng was shot "for not having done all that lay in his power." Carmagnola's action in his last campaign, at least, would certainly have brought him under that charge.



was on the horns of Macchiavelli's dilemma. Any action meant extreme action, and Venice naturally delayed to take that.

When did the Senate begin to suspect that this inactivity was culpable? Signor Battistella, whose authority is of the highest, is inclined to place the first signs of suspicion very late, quite at the close of Carmagnola's career, and to ascribe it for the most part to other causes, as we shall presently see. He relies chiefly on the despatches of the Senate to their general. These were always couched in terms of the greatest respect, and profess the fullest confidence, repeatedly informing the general that they left him a free hand. But we cannot help feeling that this attitude was rendered imperative by the circumstances. There was, at first, no possible proof of culpable neglect, only the possible induction of a suspicion; the Senate could not afford to run the risk of offending their general, and they themselves say so to their *provveditori*, though in instructing them not to criticise his operations they add the significant words, "even though justified" (September, 1427). Moreover, the despatches do show a gradual change in tone, displaying a crescendo of surprise and irritation very near akin to suspicion. But there is another point which makes us doubt whether the Senate was really speaking its true mind in its despatches to its general. When writing to the envoys at Ferrara on April 8, the Ten, who had by then assumed the conduct of the case, declare that "*Videntibus nobis jamdudum qualiter negotia nostra ducebantur per manus comitis Carmignole nostri capitanei generalis, licet apud nos esset non parva suspicio de factis suis per plurimas conjecturas et diversissima indicia, dissimulavimus tamen donec res ipsas clarius videremus.*" Here the Ten, speaking for the government, state positively that for a long time they had entertained no small suspicion of Carmagnola's action, based upon various conjectures and indications, but that they had

concealed this state of mind until the facts themselves were clearer. They do not say for how long this suspicion had been present to their minds, but they do admit having concealed the suspicion, conveying therefore to their general a false impression, which he was not clever enough to penetrate. We cannot fix precisely the date at which the government began to suspect Carmagnola's inactivity as culpable, but it appears to us that there was an accumulation of surprise and annoyance which eventually took the form of definite suspicion when brought into conjunction with the third point, Carmagnola's communications with the duke.

On this point it is not easy to see what precisely were the guiding motives of the duke and of Carmagnola. Probably the duke had a triple object in view: he hoped to win back Carmagnola to his service; the improvement in their relations which took place after the peace of Ferrara in 1428, when Filippo restored Carmagnola to the position he had held in the Milanese previous to his flight, points to this; also the fact that in 1431 Carmagnola built himself a family tomb at S. Francesco, in Milan. Further, Filippo hoped that Carmagnola would conduct the war in such a way as not to make crushing use of any advantages he might gain, or that he would even assist his late master by his inactivity, as actually happened when Carmagnola insisted on going into winter quarters in August, and thus set free Piccinino's forces. Thirdly, Filippo may have calculated that his conduct in keeping up communications with Carmagnola must eventually lead to a breach between the Republic and her general, as it did; for here again, as on the point of inactivity, we note a growing irritation culminating in positive orders to cease the correspondence. Carmagnola, on the other hand, was doubtless playing the game of a *condottiere*. He had no desire to see the duke, a good paymaster, utterly crushed; he very likely did

contemplate returning to the Milanese, as his tomb in Milan would indicate. We know that he was aspiring to an independent principality, and throughout his correspondence with Filippo he may have been bargaining with the duke to that end, though here we have no strong evidence. It has been urged in Carmagnola's defence that there was nothing culpable about his correspondence with Filippo, for he kept the Senate fully informed. That is true, but we do not know what answers he returned to Filippo, a consideration that must eventually have occurred to the Senate; while, if we are to accept Porro's statements, he was distinctly culpable when, in disobedience to positive orders, he received a ducal emissary by night in his tent, and passed beyond the lines for a colloquy.

Coming now to the second period, what was it that brought about the intervention of the Council of Ten? Was any new and positive evidence of guilt submitted to the notice of the government? and if so, what was it?

Turning to the documents, we find that on March 28 the following resolution was moved in the Council of Ten: "Quod consilium rogatorum licentietur sed mandetur omnibus sub pena haveris et persone quod teneant secretas litteras in dicto consiglio et similiter convocatum huius consilii de Decem ac additionem datam dicto consilio,"<sup>1</sup> from which it would appear that despatches or letters of some sort had been received by the Senate, read by them, and communicated to the Ten, which enjoined on the senators secrecy as to the letters and as to the convocation of the Ten and the election of a Giunta. Again, on April 7, the day of Carmagnola's arrest, and before the trial or the examination of witnesses and of Carmagnola's correspondence, the Ten inform the Venetian envoys in Ferrara that, "cum autem certificati sumus de his que dudum suspicabamur ac de mala

<sup>1</sup> Cibrario, *op. cit.* p. 54.



intentione pravisque operibus dicti Comit<sup>is</sup> clarissimam habuerimus certitudinem," they had summoned Carmagnola to their presence and arrested him. What was in the letters? Whence did they get the certitude of Carmagnola's "evil intent and wicked deeds"? Signor Battistella suggests that the fresh information which precipitated the action of the Ten and gave them the certitude of their suspicions was the news, conveyed in the letters above mentioned, that Carmagnola intended to hand Brescia over to the duke, probably on the understanding that he was to receive it back as a fief. Signor Battistella relies upon the statements of Girolamo Bossi and of Possevin, who, however, is a very late authority (1611). Bossi says, "Alli 5 Maggio il Conte Crimignola volia dar Briscia al conte e duca, e fu fato morir"; while Possevin says, "Tentatus pecunia ac promissis recipiendæ Brixia diu Vicecomitem fovisse"; and contemporary corroboration of this charge is to be found in the fact that the Ten showed the greatest solicitude for the safety of Brescia immediately after the arrest of the count. We must remember, too, that just before he left Filippo's service Carmagnola invited the Brescians to co-operate with him and to throw off the yoke of the duke, which would indicate that the lordship of Brescia was already the goal of his ambition; but in that case the suspicion of disloyalty would attach to the whole of the period of Venetian service—a supposition which Signor Battistella strenuously combats. The hypothesis that an attempt on Brescia was the positive act of treachery which gave consistency to all previous doubts and suspicions and led immediately to the trial and execution of the count, resting as it does on the authority of Signor Battistella, carries great weight. And in support of Signor Battistella's contention that new and definite information had reached the government and brought about the intervention of the Ten, I have come across a document which seems to have escaped the lynx-eyed research

of my predecessors. In the *Notatorio* of the Collegio<sup>1</sup> under the date 1432, occurs the following entry: "Expense mensis Junii pro dando illi qui detegit tractatum, lire 1 soldi 6." As we have seen, this register of the Cabinet contains entries for sums disbursed in connection with the trial of Carmagnola, payments for the boats sent to meet him, and the fee for the *magister torture* brought from Padua. These belong to the month of April, while the trial was going on. In the month of June, the month following the execution, we find the above entry referring to money paid "to him who discovered the plot." Of course it is not certain that the *tractatus* refers to the affair of Carmagnola, but we are so close to the period of the great trial and execution that the very indefiniteness of the expression would lead us to think that it referred to the case which had so recently occupied all men's minds. It is, therefore, perhaps not too hazardous to conjecture that the passage does refer to the Carmagnola affair. In that case we have here positive evidence that some one did lay before the government the discovery of a positive plot or scheme on the part of Carmagnola, and that, as Signor Battistella argues, fresh information precipitated the action of the Ten.

There is, however, another reading of events which appears to us to be more consonant with the documents, and explains their silence as to any positive act of treachery. It is possible that the letters received in the Senate and communicated to the Ten were despatches reporting Carmagnola's conduct in instigating the citizens of Bordelano to surrender to the ducal troops and in refusing to take advantage of the ruined state of the walls at Soncino. These final evidences of his deliberate and intentional remissness and disregard of Venetian interests came to fill up the measure of the Senate's disgust and to convert suspicion into certainty. The Senate accordingly placed the whole matter before the Ten as a question

<sup>1</sup> Reg. 8, fol. 109 v°.

now clearly affecting the public safety, and the Ten acted as we have seen. This interpretation, if correct, would explain why Carmagnola came so readily to Venice when summoned—a thing he would hardly have had the effrontery to do had he been conscious of a guilty intention towards the Venetians. He came readily because to him the episodes of Bordelano and Soncino were merely like so many others which the Senate had apparently condoned. He did not take into account the cumulative result of these repeated laches; nor did he foresee that, taken together, they would eventually amount, in the minds of his employers, to constructive treachery. This is what the Ten meant when they declared that for long the government had been suspicious, but had concealed their suspicion till facts themselves—that is, the repetition and the accentuation of these acts of remissness—came to clear up the situation and to bring home the conviction of guilt. The supposition we are advancing would also explain what the Ten had in mind when they said that it appointed a commission of its own members "*ut veniatur in lucem et veritatem eorum que habentur contra comitem Carmagnolam*"; they would hardly have used such phraseology had they had in their hands proofs of a new and positive act of treachery such as the surrender of Brescia to the duke. What they really meant was that their commission should examine these fresh episodes of Bordelano and Soncino in connection with Carmagnola's whole conduct of the war. The view we are expressing is also in perfect accord with the one definite statement as to the nature of Carmagnola's guilt, contained in the despatch from the Senate to the envoys at Florence. "*Quod, sicut notissimam est non solum suis Magn. sed toti mundo jam bono tempore nil fuit nobis tenere ad nostra servitia magnam quantitatem gentium . . . et expendere maximam quantitatem pecuniarum, nam nil factum fuit nec fieri voluit contra inimicum ligæ nostræ . . . per comitem comunem nostrum*"



capit. Generalem, ymo cum eis intelligentiam habuit ducendo sub simulationem rem in longum et querendo subvertere statum nostrum sicut clare detectum est." Here there is clearly no reference to a distinct and recent act of treachery, but rather to a long-drawn course of misconduct, amounting in the end to constructive treason. Finally, Giorgio Cornaro, when submitted to torture by Filippo in order to discover who had accused Carmagnola of secret intelligence with Milan, though the agony was so great that he himself said he would have revealed the name of his own son rather than face a repetition of it, can only repeat again and again that he did not know that any one had brought such a charge. As Cornaro was elected one of the Giunta to try Carmagnola, though he did not serve, and as he was sent as *provveditore* in Brescia immediately after Carmagnola's arrest, it seems certain that he would have known the name of the accuser and the nature of the charge, had there been one.<sup>1</sup>

These are the considerations which induce us to believe that the Venetians tried and executed Carmagnola upon cumulative evidence deduced from his whole conduct in their service, and that they were justified in doing so. He had acted like a true captain of adventure, thinking chiefly of his own interests, holding his employers and their desires in small account, not openly and positively a traitor perhaps, but traitorous in so far that he sacrificed their aims to his own. His intelligence was not of a high order, and he had Venice for an employer. He misread the situation, and took long-suffering for weakness. He failed to discern his peril between the Republic and the duke of Milan. He ran the risks of the dangerous game of adventure, and came near to winning the highest prize; but he forgot the chance against him, the power and the solvency of Venice. For his mistake he paid the price with his head.

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* iv. p. 168, note 1.

## Political Assassination

THE charge against the Council of Ten, that it had frequent recourse to political assassination and was in the habit of using poison for the suppression of its enemies, has been raised and, we believe, exhausted by the studies of such scholars as de Mas Latrie,<sup>1</sup> Fulin,<sup>2</sup> and Lamansky.<sup>3</sup> Hitherto the question has appeared under various aspects. Popular opinion, formed by the pen of romancers, has painted the Ten as a dark, mysterious body, employing all the horrors of dungeons, torture, poison, to heighten the terror which its name inspired. More critical students of Venetian history have been inclined, on the other hand, to treat this popular opinion as a gross exaggeration. We now know the whole truth on the subject of state poisonings in Venice. The careful examination of Venetian archives has left few, if any, new documents to be discovered ; and we are able to measure, upon the fullest evidence, the culpability or the innocence of the governing council in the Venetian Republic.

In his *Projet d'Empoisonnement* M. de Mas Latrie brought serious charges of political immorality against the Council of Ten, and declared that "le dépouillement intégral et sincère de tout ce qui reste des archives du Conseil impose à la conscience des

<sup>1</sup> *Projet d'Empoisonnement de Mahomet II.*, par M. de Mas Latrie, *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, tome i. (Paris : 1881).

<sup>2</sup> *Errori Vecchi e Documenti Nuovi*, da Rinaldo Fulin, Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto, tom. ottavo, serie quinta (Venice : 1881).

<sup>3</sup> *Secrets d'Etat de Venise*, par Vladimir Lamansky (St. Petersburg : 1884).

écrivains Vénitiens" who intend to defend their country against the charge. To this challenge the late Sig. Fulin replied, in the same year, by his articles entitled *Errori Vecchi e Documenti Nuovi*; and four years later M. Lamansky, in his vast collection of documents, supplements and completes Sig. Fulin's labours, and, at the same time, renews M. de Mas Latrie's charge against the Republic.

The whole subject of assassinations in Italy possesses a sinister interest. It includes those terrible and picturesque stories which have so often served the pen of our playwrights; tragedies that find their home peculiarly in Italy of the Renaissance; the stories of the Cenci, Vittoria Accoramboni, Lorenzino dei Medici, Caraffa, and many others. These dark passages form the romance of history; they hardly belong to history itself in its higher departments. But the widest and deepest interest which attaches to such episodes of crime and blood lies rather in the general question which they raise, how are we to explain the attitude of a people refined, cultivated, far from brutal in their tastes and in their vices, who yet freely admitted the use of such weapons as the poisoned dagger and cup? and that, too, not merely in private life, where the fury of revenge may account for the horror of many deaths, but even in their political relations with foreign powers, where these revolting weapons were necessarily used in cold blood, and where treachery was adopted with as little scruple as open war is now declared.

It is this phenomenon of murder justified as a weapon and admitted in the code of international law that attracts and rivets our attention. That we have not exaggerated the frequency of attempted assassination the authorities we have cited abundantly prove. That we do not over-estimate the sanction of assassination will be made clear by the following passages taken from a variety of writers upon political ethics; although we must remember that the whole question



was, as Cocceius has it, "materia intricata admodum et hactenus non satis extricata."

St. Thomas Aquinas, in the famous passage of his *Summa*, says, "It is not lawful to slay any one except upon the public authority and for the common weal." "He who exercises the public authority and kills a man in his own defence justifies his action on the ground of the common weal." Again, Baldus declares, "It is lawful to slay your enemy by poison." Cocceius argues that assassins and poisons are not admissible weapons in time of war, unless the war may be absolutely terminated by their means. Grotius is even more explicit: "Quem interficere liceat," he says, "eum gladio aut veneno interimas nihil interest, si jus naturæ respicias"; and he confirms this dictum by adding that "to slay your enemy wherever you find him is sanctioned not only by the law of nature, but also by the law of nations; nor will it serve to prove the contrary that those who are arrested for such acts are put to death in torments, for that is only another proof of the law of nations that against foes all is permissible"; upon which Gronovius remarks, "and therefore you may slay your enemy when he is unarmed, unawares, even asleep." And this is what Burlamachi has upon the point: "To the question whether the assassination of a foe be lawful, I reply yes, if the agent of the assassination be a subject of the prince who employs him and not of the victim." We would call attention to this curious reservation made by Burlamachi; it introduces a new point in political ethics, a point to which we shall presently return. Finally, Puffendorff decides that war, while it lasts, breaks all bonds of reciprocal rights and duties, and that in taking arms against us our enemy has granted us an unlimited faculty to employ against him all possible acts of hostility.

So far, then, the lawyers. If we turn to the Church we find the same principles enunciated with even greater frankness, especially as regards tyrannicide.

The churchmen were, of course, influenced by the examples of Jael, Judith, and others. Mariana, *De Rege et Regis Institutione*, cap. vi., speaking of the assassination of Henry III. by Jacques Clement, says, "Nuperque in Gallia monumentum nobile est constitutum. . . . quo Principes doceantur impios haud impune cadere"; and adds, doubtless referring to St. Thomas, that Clement learnt from the theologians that it is lawful to slay a tyrant. Mariana observes, it is true, that the Council of Constance had condemned this doctrine, but no pope had ever approved the condemnation, and therefore it was invalid in the eyes of good churchmen. For a general defence of assassination and easements for the same we may call attention to that curious collection of Jesuitical opinions compiled, under the title of *Artes Jesuiticæ*, by "Cristianus Alethophilus"; warning our readers, however, that the compilation is hostile.

The passages we have just cited abundantly prove the laxity of view upon this question of assassination—a laxity which began in Italy, but spread all over Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the part of lawyers, as on the part of churchmen, there was a steady and determined attempt to bring the crime of assassination within the pale of international and of ecclesiastical law. This is the phenomenon which we propose to study—to trace its origin, its growth, its justification, the reasons which induced men to accept so monstrous a proposition, its inherent weakness, and its failure.

In examining the documents before us we see that the assassinations with which they deal fall under four heads: tyrannicide, political assassination, executionary assassination, and private assassination. The attitude of men's minds towards assassination varied as the kind varied. Executionary assassination, the murder of a fugitive criminal, sanctioned or even invited by the government from which he was flying,

we may dismiss at once from our consideration. In the period of which we are treating such retribution hardly required any justification. There were simply two methods of procedure against criminals: the ordinary method of justice, which ended in an execution; the extraordinary, or supplemental, method of justice, which ended in an assassination. Private assassination, too, though frequent enough, was never, so far as we know, recognized as a possibly legitimate act by the secular power, whatever attempts the Jesuits may be reported to have made to palliate the crime in order to establish their own ascendancy over the actions and the consciences of their penitents. This leaves for our consideration the two species of tyrannicide and political assassination, or assassination used as a weapon against foes of the state.

The point of view which justified tyrannicide is not difficult to understand. The crimes and cruelties of princes have frequently rendered them intolerable to their subjects. There is a point beyond which human endurance will not go. Mariana (*loc. cit.*) lays it down that "*Principum potentiam imbecillam esse si reverentia ab animis subditorum semel abscesserit.*" The greatness of the prince's position, however, the number of his guards, the power and importance of those who are attached to his throne by personal and selfish motives, the enormous difficulties in the way of successful revolution, all render his person impervious to any attack except the secret and perfidious attack of the assassin.

The authority of the ancients, the study of Plutarch, the praises lavished on the names of Harmodius, of Brutus, of almost all tyrannicides, became an incentive to those who thirsted for fame, or were enamoured of liberty. The well-known conspiracy against the Medici in 1512-3 will occur to every one, and the cry of Boscoli to his friend Luca della Robbia, "Ah! Luca, take Brutus from my heart, that I may die entirely Christian."



Lorenzino de' Medici's<sup>1</sup> "Apology for the Murder of Alessandro, Duke of Florence," is a document full of instruction in this regard. Lorenzino opens with a defence of his action generally, based upon the example of the ancients, and the sacred duty imposed on each one to secure political freedom for himself and his fellow-citizens. He then comes to a more difficult part of the count against him, the opinion of those who maintain that, although Alexander was a tyrant, and therefore in all justice slayable, Lorenzino had no right to be his executioner "essendo del sangue suo e fidandosi egli di me." Over this point we must pause, for it introduces the one limitation which Italian sentiment seems to have imposed on the perfect justifiability of tyrannicide. The opinion of Burlamachi, quoted above, will recur to our minds; he says that assassination is legitimate, provided that one of the patient's own subjects be not employed. This would seem to be an expansion of the idea which Lorenzino is combating, the idea that treachery between blood relations is unjustifiable. The opinion appears to have been deeply rooted in the Italian view on the question; witness the appeal of Bernabò Visconti when treacherously seized by his nephew, "O Gian Galeazzo, non esser traditor del tuo sangue"; and, again, an anonymous author, whom we shall presently have occasion to quote in full, argues that if Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, had any just cause of complaint against the Marquis of Pescara for compassing his life, it must have been based on the fact that the Marquis was related to him by ties of blood. Lorenzino defends himself first on the ground that Alexander was not a Medici at all, but the bastard son of a groom's wife; and secondly, by boldly asserting that even had Alexander been his cousin, "le leggi ordinate contro a'

<sup>1</sup> "L'apologia . . . di Lorenzino de' Medici," published in Daelli's *Biblioteca Rara*, vol. ii. (Milan: 1862); also *Lorenzaccio*, by Pierre Gauthiez (Paris, Fontemoing: 1904).

tiranni," and the general consensus of opinion would have compelled him to the deed.

As to the legal aspects of tyrannicide, perhaps no one would have dared to enunciate such a doctrine inside a tyrant's own dominions. The approval was usually popular, *ex post facto*, and dependent on success. Yet there was clearly an effort to formulate such deeds to bring them within the pale of some recognised law. And this observation leads us to another which may, in part, account for the number and the audacity of the regicides which occur in Italian history, the observation that the titles of almost all the native Italian princes were more or less defective. We have only to remember the constant usurpations, the eagerness with which the Scaligers, Carraresi, Visconti, and Sforza sought for an imperial title, and the difficulty with which they obtained one, to perceive at once how important a sound title must have been. This weakness in Italian titles was inherent in the fundamental conception of Italian politics, dating from the age of Charlemagne, the division of the supreme authorities temporal and spiritual between the emperor and the pope. No one of these Italian princes could claim to be autocratic in theory as well as in fact; therefore the plea of divine right was of no avail for him as a safeguard; and his murder became almost legitimate if it received the sanction of his superiors, the emperor or the pope. We may conclude that tyrannicide was held to be justifiable; but public opinion placed limits upon the degrees within which treachery was not to be used, the degrees of blood relationship. We must remember, however, that this species of assassination had no place in Venice. Owing to the nature of her constitution, however tyrannical she might have been—though indeed she was not—there was no one man by whose death the burden of tyranny could have been removed from the necks of the people. The

whole governmental authority in Venice resided in councils, committees of nobles — corporations, in short, which are impervious to the dagger and to poison.

And this brings us now to the fourth and last species of assassination—political assassination, as we have called it—in which Venice enjoys a sinister prominence. Here the question of the natural history of the idea, and the attitude of men's minds towards it, is not quite so easy to solve as it is in the case of tyrannicide. How came the pernicious doctrine, that states may use assassination as a weapon, to be taught? how is it that this teaching took such a hold upon politicians of that time? For the origin of the doctrine we shall have to go back to two principles which, whatever may be their ethical validity, are deeply seated in human nature—the idea that might is right, and the idea of expediency. The one finds a concise expression in Dante's well-known dictum that "*ille populus qui, cunctis athletizantibus pro imperio mundi, prævaluit, de jure divino prævaluit.*" This is a doctrine of fatalism tempered by a belief in the divine governance of the world. In this view every struggle with a foe is a species of duel, an appeal to the "*judicium Dei.*" It is inspired by the old belief, of which we get the converse in the cynical epigram, "God is on the side of the strongest battalions," that the supreme ruler will not allow the wrong to be victorious, and that point being granted, it follows that all means towards victory at once become legitimate, because they are means which assist the fulfilment of the divine will.

The second principle which underlies the doctrine of political assassination—the principle of expediency, which was summed up in the famous proverb "*Uomo morto non fa guerra*"—has its roots in a very different part of human nature. It belongs not to the necessitarian and fatalistic side, but to the side of free will, to the ineradicable belief that man can modify his



conditions and govern his actions, and is entitled to do so with a view to his own safety and convenience.

These two ideas, which lie so wide apart, at the extreme poles of human thought, yet form the basis of any attempt to formulate and to bring within the pale of law the doctrine of political assassination. When the propositions of this doctrine come to be openly discussed, we shall find, as is natural, that jurists, churchmen, and politicians alike rely upon the latter basis—the basis of expediency—for the justification of the doctrine. The bias in this direction was given by the gradual development of the modern state with its principles of policy, reasons of state—statecraft, in fact—which that development produced. Macchiavelli formulated the doctrine that the state weal, the state needs, were the supreme, the sole, the righteous end and aim of every ruler and of every citizen, an end to which all other considerations must yield. Then came the casuists with their teaching that the end justifies the means, and we at once get the doctrine of political assassination, that where state expediency requires the removal of a foe, that may be legitimately accomplished by any means in your power. And yet, although the doctrine was thus formulated as a tenable thesis in political ethics, and assassination was sanctioned as a legitimate weapon in the hands of government, it is impossible to read the documents relating to the question without feeling that men had a bad conscience on the matter. The Council of Ten dreaded the publication of their secrets; they insist upon “*secretezza et iterum secretezza*,” not solely through fear of reprisals in kind—as we have pointed out, reprisals in kind against a corporation were difficult, if not impossible—but also through fear of the infamy such revelations would bring upon their state. The truth is, that the conscience of European humanity had already been moulded upon the Christian principle “Love your enemies.” That bond was laid upon the human

conscience, however far human action might depart from the rule. The conscience cannot be surrendered. No doctrine laid down by jurists and supported by cogent arguments, no absolution on the part of the Church, no *ex cathedrâ* dogmas as to the non-culpability of such acts, were of any avail to free these men from the sense of sin before the bar of their own higher selves.

So far we have endeavoured to trace the origin and growth of this doctrine, that political assassination may be a legitimate weapon in the armoury of nations. What the doctrine looks like when stated in its fullest form we shall best gather from the treatise of the anonymous author to whom we have already referred. The document throws valuable light upon the whole discussion, and contains as cold and as precise a statement of the position as we can hope to find. Our author entitles his paper, "Of the Right that Princes have to compass the Lives of their Enemies' Allies"<sup>1</sup>:

"The Marquis of Pescara, as minister and captain-general of the Emperor Charles V., organizes and conducts a conspiracy against the life of Ercole, Duke of Ferrara, ally and relation of Francis, King of France. The conspiracy does not take effect; and coming to the knowledge of the duke, he loudly complains of this particular machination against his life. There seems to be some doubt, then, whether one prince, in order to weaken another prince, his enemy, may and can procure the death of his enemy's allies. For the complaints of the Duke of Ferrara are of such a nature that they almost amount to a declaration that actions of this sort are entirely illicit and unjust.

"Upon this point I repeat what I said incidentally at the moment when the event was under discussion, and I add some considerations with which a more profound analysis of the subject furnishes me; and I maintain that in all strictness of sound policy you

<sup>1</sup> Lamansky, *op. cit.* pp. 529-33. The MS. belonged to Comm. Nicolò Barozzi.

may and can debilitate your enemy in any way you choose, even by the treacherous murder of his allies ; and if the Duke of Ferrara complained at the time of the arrangements made to his disadvantage, he did so more because of the particular and personal position of the marquis, the promoter and conductor of the conspiracy, than because of the conspiracy itself.

“And, to prove the first clause of my thesis, I affirm that political expediency, or reasons of state as we call it, teaches and permits each prince to secure above everything the preservation of his state, that he may subsequently proceed to its aggrandizement ; and, therefore, weighing and foreseeing all that may injure and all that may benefit his state, he must take every possible means to anticipate the one in order to prevent it, and to court the other in order to appropriate it ; and hence it follows that all action taken with such ends in view is said to be taken for reasons of state, and that is a rational justification of action which has every for scope and object the conservation of the *status quo*, or the maintenance of the state itself.

“These rules of political expediency, which, be it observed, are obligatory for no other object save for the service, the security, and the perpetuation of sovereignty, interpret the laws, alter prescription, change habits, and as it were arbitrate, dispose, and convert all the accidents of time and all human operations to their own proper use and benefit, to such an extent that, magnifying the good and justifying the evil by this sanction of reasons of state, they curb and predominate the vulgar estimate of actions, vivify the will and the conduct of princes, and constitute themselves mistress in spite of custom and morality.

“In every state political expediency rules absolutely in its own right ; but in the more powerful states it acquires a peculiarly extended jurisdiction and authority from the very power and pre-eminence of those states ; and, therefore, we see the moral laws contravened and superseded by great princes much



more lightly than by their inferiors, because in their case every title, every positive prescription of laws human and divine, must be made to bow to their advantage; hence for great princes that is lawful and customary which is absolutely forbidden and impossible for others. We argue that war no less than peace is a necessary and efficacious agent in the preservation and aggrandizement of dominion; in war, however, political expediency and reasons of State vigorously assert their authority within this their proper jurisdiction; and they do so with all the more resolution that war proceeds by fury and violence, by outrageous and impetuous acts, and by these very means procures the extension and advantage of the state. And so, if the Emperor Charles, warring against the King of France, perchance condescended to attempt the life of Ercole, Duke of Ferrara, friend and relation of that king, he only did what war and the customary reasons of state enabled and obliged him to do.

“Moreover, in the conduct and progress of a war, since the sovereign is bound for his own advantage and security to debilitate his foe by all the ways and means in his power, this method of depriving him of friends and adherents is both most opportune and obligatory. And should it haply be urged that the murder of an allied prince is an action too base to be compassed, we may reply that in the fury and duration of the war there is no action so base that it may not be demonstrated as a direct consequence of the war itself, and that this very quality of base iniquity is to be found in all wars, even in those justified by necessity; nay, further, we argue that the iniquity which achieves the highest amount of safety to him who employs it in such cases is always the least damnable iniquity. And this holds good if we apply our universal proposition to the particular case before us; for it was of the highest importance to the emperor to sunder the Duke of Ferrara and the

King of France, and political expediency pointed out to him that if all other means failed or were difficult, he ought to adopt that kind of sundering which would prove final and secure. By the murder of his ally you effectually rob your foe of his forces, counsel, and support. This could not be done so easily either by attacking the ally in his state, for that would only nerve him to fresh efforts, nor yet by expelling him from his kingdom, for we have often seen exiled sovereigns return to their dominions, after a brief period of revolution, nourishing hostility and meditating revenge. Nor should any methods you may adopt towards such an end seem strange and iniquitous, for open war does not exclude methods quite as vicious. I will even venture to declare that conspiracy may be the least impious method you can use. For sieges, which by their long-drawn cruelty drive to a miserable end so many innocent lives, the ravaging of fields and the poisoning of wells, which destroy, as in a lightning flash, such wealth of earth's produce, and send irrevocably to death so many beasts and hapless folk whose lives were free from blame, the sack of cities, and their surrender to the soldiers' licence, wherein they commit unspeakable atrocities, the sowing of revolution, and the disturbance of governments under pretext of religion,—all these, I say, are actions far more vicious and detestable than those which any possible conspiracy could bring to birth. For, pressed to its last issue, a conspiracy only results in the slaughter of one man who, as principal or ally, has had a share in the origin or in the progress of the war; while the mass of persons who perish in the incidents of a campaign are for the most part entirely innocent.

“ If the argument be advanced that an assassination is an action taken in cold blood, while all the other actions enumerated above are committed in the heat of battle, this consideration alone shall serve to prove the error of the argument, the consideration that

while the war endures neither the blood nor the indignation of either party can ever be said to have run cold.

"I conclude therefore that for reasons of state and reasons of war it is the prince's duty to aim ever at the enfeeblement and annihilation of his foe by stripping him, even treacherously, of his allies, as of those who form an essential part of his forces.

"And I affirm the second clause of my thesis, that if Duke Ercole complained so bitterly of the plot organized against him by the Marquis of Pescara, he was complaining really not of the conspiracy but of the man who organized it. For the conspiracy, as a wise and intelligent prince would know quite well, was both possible and legal for reasons of state. But the organizer, as an Italian lord, and also as a relation to the duke, ought to have behaved more chivalrously towards him, and so the duke condemned accidentally in the person of the marquis the iniquity of the attempt; though he approved, on the grounds of custom of war and political expediency, the steps taken to carry it into execution."

Such is the doctrine of political assassination, stated with absolute frankness by the anonymous author. It is not necessary for us to point out how, in this view, all action is governed by expediency; how justification is sought in "rules of state, not rules of good." Nor need we pause to analyze the arguments adduced in favour of political assassination—the argument of clemency to subjects, of a merciful expeditiousness by the destruction of the very source and fountain head of the war—all these are set out with perfect clearness and so speciously supported that they might well have induced statesmen to adopt them. How thoroughly they were adopted by Italian princes the story of Bayard and the Duke of Ferrara will serve to show. The duke informed the chevalier that he intended to poison the pope. Bayard declared that he would never consent to the murder of God's



lieutenant on earth. Thereupon the duke shrugged his shoulders, and, stamping on the ground, exclaimed, "By the body of God, Monsieur de Bayard, I should like to kill all my enemies just in this way. However, as you do not approve, we will leave the matter alone; but unless God finds some remedy, both you and I will live to repent it." We only wish to point out now two general considerations upon the whole sentiment with regard to political assassination as displayed in the treatise of the anonymous author. First, that the attitude of mind which attempted to legitimize assassination indicates a revolt of what was held to be common sense against the Christian idea; the common sense that "takes the cash and lets the credit go," that cannot grasp the profounder doctrine that the whole world is nothing to a man in comparison with his own soul. And in this aspect it raises a question that is essentially a modern question, a question which is still waiting for its answer, How far may the ethical standards in the individual and in the state differ from one another? is there one rule of conduct for nations and another for persons; or is the ethical canon absolute at all times and in all places? And the second consideration—which also has bearings on some open questions of to-day—is this, that here we see a rudimentary international law growing up side by side with the new conditions of the states of Europe. Political assassination is discussed as a weapon of war, in precisely the same spirit that the Geneva Convention discussed the use of explosive bullets, Greek fire, or the immunity of ambulance waggons.

Our readers may possibly feel that we have insisted too much on the existence of the doctrine of political assassination as a formulated, discussable proposition in the ethics of nations. Though we admit a tendency in those who handle this subject to become pre-occupied by it, to see assassination in every sudden death, and poison in every unaccountable illness; yet

we maintain that such documents as the one we have just quoted prove that the question of political assassination was matter for study, for discussion, for possible acceptance as a maxim of government; and the voluminous pages of M. Lamansky prove how frequently political assassination was attempted, not only in Italy, but also throughout Europe; that is to say, they prove how far the acceptance of these doctrines had gone.

The students who turned their attention to this point in statecraft, who argued and formulated the legitimacy of political assassination, seem to us to have fallen into an error similar to that which vitiated the speculations of the earlier political economists. They isolated their phenomenon for purposes of study, and then predicated its qualities and its action in isolation as its qualities and action when free in its proper place in the body politic. Political assassination, kept within bounds, used as philosophers and students desired to see it used, might possibly commend itself to the common-sense of statesmen. But assassination let loose upon the state is quite another matter. And this consideration leads us to observe one or two points of weakness inherent in the doctrine which, in part at least, accounts for its failure to take a permanent place among the maxims of government. And first, the whole proposition was lawless and immoral; lawless and immoral because it was not in the main current of development, in the destined order of growth; because it was a violation of conscience. The conscience of Europe had been Christianised; a step had been made towards the better knowledge that love, not hatred, is the higher law of life. Retreat from that position was henceforth impossible for the conscience of European mankind, however frequently the actions of men might contravene the rule that it implied. The idea of political assassination and all its many kindred ideas belong to a transient period of development, one of the backward sweeps in

the spiral of human progress, the mood of negation, the epoch of revolt against the unpractical Christian idea—a revolt which was destined to fortify, consolidate, and permanently enthrone that idea in the mind of man. This is, of course, judgment after the event. The men who formulated political assassination doubtless believed that they were assisting the development of human intelligence, that they were placing in the hands of princes a weapon which would permanently enrich the armoury of states. If they had succeeded in establishing the maxims of political assassination, we should have had nothing to say. But they did not succeed. No doubt to practical politicians these unlawful and immoral means appeared to be a short and easy method for cutting the knot of many a difficult situation, provided always that they could be kept under control and applied only to that purpose which seemed to justify their adoption, the welfare of the state. But that was a proviso which could never be observed. It is impossible to ring-fence, to hermetically seal up the unlawful and immoral element in a state. The most successful attempt to do so was made by Venice when she constructed the Council of Ten, endowed it with unlimited powers, and secured its irresponsibility by enveloping it in secrecy. But the virus cannot be confined to one part of the social structure. If it is present anywhere it will inevitably spread, and sooner or later it will infect the whole body politic. The conscious and deliberate introduction of those false doctrines of statecraft is the first step towards anarchy, beginning with the corruption of the prince. The sovereign who has learned that all is lawful to him as guardian of the public weal, as sovereign, will soon slip into the easy and consolatory belief that all is lawful to him as an individual man. The people will argue that what is lawful to one man as man is lawful to all men as men. Hence a collision between prince and people. The prince arrives at the maxim, "L'état



c'est moi"; he expands himself to the absorption of his state in his own personal and private individuality; the people arrive at the maxim of their own sovereignty; they expand the idea of themselves till it absorbs the governing powers; there is a confusion between the ruler and the ruled; the outlines of the state are broken down, and revolution ensues.

So far we have dealt with the question of political assassination in its abstract form, considering it generally in its widest applications. We may turn now to the special cases before us. Venice has furnished us with the material for the foregoing remarks, and the archives of the Republic are peculiarly fitted to do this. Venice, as a state, enjoyed a singularly long life, free from internal revolutions which have so often wrought havoc among the state records of other nations. The rigidity of her constitution gave continuity to her policy; her state papers were carefully preserved, as indicating the lines upon which that policy must move. Finally, the Republic is dead; "the doge does not figure in the *Almanach de Gotha*"; the archives are open to us; there is no state susceptibility to wound. The works of de Mas Latrie and Lamansky may be regarded as the voluminous pleadings in the case of the World *versus* Venice. As M. de Mas Latrie says: "C'est Venise elle-même qui parle et qui dépose dans sa propre cause." M. de Mas Latrie and M. Lamansky are for the plaintiffs, and Signor Fulin for the defence. The indictment is portentous, and if judgment is to be given in accordance with the maxims of to-day, the case must go against Venice. It is too late to plead denial of the facts; the mass of facts is overwhelming; that plea has been killed by Daru's sinister epigram, "Quand on ne veut pas être accusé d'empoisonnement, il est fâcheux d'être aussi bien servi par la fortune." We would rather plead justification on the ground of custom of the time and on the ground of necessity. It is abundantly evident from these documents that

Venice never had any great belief in the weapon of political assassination. She adopted it only when hard pressed and under stringent necessity, and as a concurrent means of escape from her difficulties, not as the sole means. The adoption of these means at all is, indeed, the result and the proof of her weakness. Wherever they are discussed by the Ten we shall find, if we look abroad, that the Republic was at that moment in grave danger from her foreign enemies. The documents in question belong to the archives of the Council of Ten, or of its commission, the Three Inquisitors of State. It was natural that such delicate matters should pass through the hands of the most powerful body in Venice, especially as secrecy was essential, and absolute secrecy could be obtained only in the *Secreta Secretissima* of the Ten.

The revelations contained in these papers are startling. The first section alone of M. Lamansky's book cites ninety-one different proposals to make use of assassination. His papers range from the year 1415 to 1768, and show us attempts on the lives of the following, among other distinguished persons: The Emperor Sigismund, Matthias Corvinus, Marsilio Carrara, Filippo Maria Visconti, Francesco Sforza, the Sultan, Charles VIII. of France, Pope Pius IV., and Etienne le Petit, the false Czar Peter III. It would be impossible and unprofitable for us to analyse all the cases collected by M. Lamansky and Signor Fulin. We shall content ourselves with taking four or five typical cases, which will sufficiently demonstrate the method and the action of the Republic in the whole of this matter.

Although the Council of Ten had been in the habit of using poisons, and even of keeping a professional poisoner in their employ for many years previously, the first general order on the subject is dated October 17, 1509, and runs thus:

"By the authority of this Council be it decreed that the chiefs of the Council be charged to inform

themselves in the most cautious and secret manner possible as to the ways and means by which we can put to death, through poison or otherwise, certain bitter and implacable enemies of our state."

But earlier than this date we find the Council of Ten receiving tenders for assassination, and contracting for the removal of their foes. Among the tenders received and discussed by the Council, two are remarkable for their frankness, and will serve us as specimens of this kind of proposal. One is the offer made by Biagio Catena, styled by the Council Archbishop of Trebizond; the other is the tariff presented by Fra John of Ragusa, both of the candidates for employment being clerics. The document relating to the offer of Catena runs thus:

"1419, 13 September.—Ser Johannes Diedo, Ser Rugerius Ruzzini, Presidents of the Ten, moving. On the 17th of June last the Council passed a resolution that the Archbishop of Trebizond, who offers to place in our hands, absolutely and under no safe-conduct, John Brendola, of Este, and John Barberius, of Padua, accused of having set fire to our Church of St. Mark, should, upon the actual fulfilment of his offer, be freed from the outlawry under which he now lies. The said archbishop came to Venice in person, and stated and promised again that he would shortly bring the said criminals to Venetian territory, but added that he required letters patent to enable him to arrest those men, for otherwise none of our rectors or officials would give him credence. Be it now moved that such letters patent be granted to the said archbishop."

The letters were granted, requiring all officials to give every assistance to the archbishop in the execution of his police duties. On the same day all three Presidents of the Ten moved that—

"Inasmuch as the said archbishop offers to poison Marsilio de Carrara by means of Francesco Pierlamberti, of Lucca, and wishes to travel in person with the said Francesco, that he may assure himself of the



actual execution of the deed ; but for this purpose he requires a poison, which he charges himself to have made by a capable poison master if the money be supplied him ; and, further, inasmuch as the said archbishop, from Easter last to the present time, has, out of his own pocket, been paying the inn charges of the said John of Este, John Barberio, and Baldassere de Odoni, who is now in prison in Ferrara, following them all over the place in order to carry out his intent, in the course of which he says he has spent one hundred and eighty ducats of his own money. Be it resolved, that for making the poison, for necessary expenses, and for buying a horse for the said archbishop—for his own is dead—the sum of fifty ducats out of our treasury be given to the archbishop and his companion Francesco Pierlamberti. Ayes, 10 ; noes, 5 ; doubtful, 1."

The tariff of Brother John of Ragusa is a document even more ingenious than the tender of the Archbishop of Trebizond. It runs thus :

"On the 14th December, 1513, the said Brother John of Ragusa presented himself to the Presidents of the Ten, and declared that he would work wonders in killing any one they chose by certain means of his own invention, and therefore begs : First, that on the success of his experiment he shall receive one thousand five hundred ducats a year for life ; secondly, that if the noble lords wish him to operate on any one else, the annuity shall be raised in a sum to be agreed upon."

The Council accepted Brother John's offer, and "enjoined him to go and make his first experiment upon the person of the Emperor." Emboldened by this first successful appeal, Brother John then presented the following scale of prices :

"For the Grand Turk, 500 ducats ; for the King of Spain (exclusive of travelling expenses), 150 ducats ; for the Duke of Milan, 60 ducats ; for the Marquis of Mantua, 50 ducats ; for his Holiness, only 100 ducats.

As a rule," he concludes, "the longer the journey and the more valuable the life, the higher would be the price."

The quality and the number of these men who were found to offer themselves to the Council of Ten upon such wild ventures call for our attention. They were, as a rule, the very scum of society; criminals who swarmed in the narrow streets of Venice, and earned a livelihood by all disgraceful means. Their number was constantly augmented by the pernicious action of the "bando," or outlawry, combined with the weakness of the Venetian police. To prove how weak the police were, we have only to remember the difficulty they found in putting a stop to the riotous sport of the young nobles, whose delight it was to fasten a chain to the collar of a large dog and run with him full speed down the narrow *calles*; the dog, of course, kept to one side, and his master to the other, and most of the passers-by were laid in the mud. Or we may cite that curious story of Francesco Concha, chief inspector of the police magistrates, known as the Signori di Notte. Concha had under his charge two brothers condemned to be hanged for theft. For one of these brothers Concha conceived a strong friendship. On the day of their execution in the piazzetta, after the first brother had been hanged, and when the noose was round the neck of the other, Concha, head of the guard whose duty it was to see the sentence carried out, walked up the steps of the scaffold, took the noose off his friend's neck, and saying, "Tu vedrai adesso se ti voglio ben," led him down into the crowd, and both disappeared. Though the Council offered large rewards for their arrest, they were never captured. The police, then, being so weak, and criminals being able to escape so easily, the only mode of punishing them was by outlawry, with a price on their heads. The result was that the frontiers of Venetian territory swarmed with criminals, all ready to purchase their rehabilitation by some service to the state. They naturally offered

that kind of service to which they were already accustomed, assassination, or some other equally dubious undertaking.

We come now to the case of one of the most famous of these desperadoes whose services the Council of Ten accepted. It is a typical case ; and though there are many others, one will be enough. Michelotto Mudazzo, a Cretan, first appears upon the scene in the year 1414, when he was condemned to a year's imprisonment for theft. Three years later he was able to rehabilitate himself, and to acquire a considerable fortune by a stroke of luck. The Council of Ten were anxious to have in their hands a certain noble, Giorgio Bragadin, accused of treason and of having made and given away a plan of Venice. The Ten offered four thousand ducats for the person of Bragadin, dead or alive. Mudazzo presented himself to the Council, and declared that he would be content with two thousand ducats on condition that that sum should be secured to his children in case he perished in the venture. The Ten agreed ; Mudazzo succeeded in capturing Bragadin, who was hanged between the columns in the piazzetta. Mudazzo received his reward, but he did not enjoy it long ; he had embarked on the dangerous business of agent for the Council of Ten, depositary of some of their secrets, and therefore liable to be either imprisoned or made away with the moment the Ten believed that they would have no further use for him. The next we hear of Mudazzo is that he is in disgrace ; condemned to four months' imprisonment and a fine of two hundred lire for striking his adversary in open court, and a year's imprisonment, a fine of two hundred lire, and perpetual banishment for suborning witnesses. The affair of Bragadin had taught Mudazzo how money might be drawn from the state ; and now in his banishment he began casting about for similar means of ingratiating himself with the Ten, and of earning the revocation of his outlawry. In the year 1419 the



Council of Ten resolved to adopt the method of assassination against the Emperor Sigismund, "*cum non solum nostro dominio et toti mundo sit clarissima et manifesta mala voluntas et dispositio domini Regis Hungarie.*" Mudazzo offered at his own cost to find and to murder the Emperor. His reward was to be as much land in Crete as would give him a yearly income of one thousand ducats. He also received a safe-conduct to come to Venice, and to stay there till a poison could be prepared for the emperor. The Ten wrote to the Governor of Verona, instructing him to find out certain people known as "those of the poisons," "*qui mirifice conficiunt venenum,*" who lived at Puegnago, a small village belonging to Pandolfo Malatesta, near Salò on the Lago di Garda; and to procure from them a jar of their mixture. They also sent to Padua to a druggist known as Peter Paul, a famous poison brewer, requiring him to furnish "a drinkable and an eatable poison." Peter Paul was absent from Padua, and the governor, seeking about for some one else to carry out his commission, applied to Master John, doctor in Vicenza; another famous poison maker, Michele del Nievo, received a similar order. In February, 1420, the powder and the liquid, the eatable and the drinkable poison, arrived from Vicenza, and were deposited in the chamber of the Council. The Presidents of the Ten sent for Mudazzo, and desired him to experiment with the powder and the liquid in their presence. Mudazzo refused to touch the poisons unless their concocter were present. Thereupon the Ten, in dread lest the affair had been hanging on too long and would take wind, dismissed Mudazzo, and reinforced his "*bando*" against him. But Mudazzo did not despair; he waited his time, and ten years later he reappears before the Ten with a proposal to murder Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan. The Vicenza poisons had been lying all this time in the cupboard of the Ten. Their efficacy had never been tested, and the Council now ordered an

experiment to be made with them upon two pigs. The pigs did not die. The Ten sent for Mudazzo and ordered him to procure fresh and better poisons. He declined, and the Presidents of the Council took steps to have a new supply sent from Vicenza. But in the meanwhile Mudazzo could not keep his secret from his friends. He told his "compare," Matteo Bevilaqua, of the commission he had received, and of the fortune it would bring him; Bevilaqua told his son-in-law Pegolotto; and Pegolotto told his friend John de Casanis, who wrote an account of the whole to the Duke of Milan. Mudazzo, instead of going to Milan, was sent off a *quasi*-prisoner to Corfu, and we do not know that he ever saw Venice again. The last we hear of him is a wild offer which he makes to sell to the Ten a poison which will work in three ways, in food, in drink, or by touch—an offer which the Council rejected by a large majority. They were weary of Mudazzo and his futile promises.<sup>1</sup>

In this story of Mudazzo the Ten explain their own procedure with perfect frankness—a frankness engendered by their reliance on the absolute secrecy of their archives. It was necessary to state exactly how they had acted in the matter, in order to put future councillors in full possession of the facts. We gain by this frankness, and have before us a complete and typical case. The attitude of the Ten is perfectly clear; they were under great pressure, and adopted the proposals to assassinate as a possible, though not as the sole or even probable means of freeing themselves from their difficulties. To have rejected such means would have seemed to them culpable folly and neglect. The futility and ineffectiveness of the plans are characteristic of the majority of the proposals made to the Ten and sanctioned by them.

The next case we shall take is that of a wholesale attempt to destroy the Turkish army. The attempt

<sup>1</sup> See Lamansky, *op. cit.* pp. 5-7, and Cibrario, *op. cit.* pp. 70-2.

was impotent, like most of its predecessors; but the details are so strange and picturesque, and throw so much light on the more famous case of the *Untori* of Milan, that we shall give the history of it at some length. In the year 1649 Lunardo Foscolo, Provveditore Generale di Dalmazia, writes from Zara to the Inquisitors of State, as follows:

“To the most illustrious and most honoured lords, my masters.

“My incessant occupation in the discharge of this most laborious service never makes me forget my intent and desire to procure advantage to my country. I then, considering the perilous state of the kingdom of Candia, first treacherously invaded, and now openly occupied by the Turks, the pre-eminence of their forces, the copiousness of their soldiery, the opulence of the Turkish treasury, which will enable them to maintain the war for many years, and also being well aware that, although the public spirit of Venice yields to none in courage and magnanimity, the Republic has neither forces, men, nor money, wherewith to resist much longer the attacks of its foes, and reflecting on the impossibility to meet such a heavy expenditure, have applied myself to a study of the methods whereby the Turkish power might be overcome without risk of men or burden to the exchequer, and how the kingdom of Candia might be recovered; for, after God, our hope to reacquire it is small indeed.

“Now there is here a good subject of Venice, lately appointed doctor, who besides his skill in healing is also a famous distiller. His name is Michiel Angelo Salamon. He is desirous to prove himself, what he is in fact, a faithful servant of your excellencies. I explained my wishes to him, and he availed himself of the presence here of the plague to distil a liquid expressed from the spleen, the buboes, and carbuncles of the plague-stricken; and this, when mixed with other ingredients, will have the power wherever it is scattered to slay any number of persons, for it is the



quintessence of plague. I considered that if this quintessence of plague were sown in the enemies' camps at Retimo, Cannea, and San Todero, and if it operates as Dr. Michiel assures me it will, this would greatly assist us to recover the kingdom of Candia. I accordingly determined not to lose the opportunity to have a vase of the poison prepared, and this jar shall be kept, with all due precautions, for the service of your excellencies. I believe, however, that some ruse must be adopted to entice the Turks into the trap, and would suggest that we should make use of the Albanian fez, or some other cloth goods, which the Turks are accustomed to buy, so that the poison may pass through as many hands in as short a time as possible. The cloth should be made up in parcels as if for sale, after having been painted over with the quintessence, and then placed in separate boxes destined for the various places where we desire to sow the poison. The quintessence, well secured in several cases for the greater safety of those who have to handle and transport it, should be sent to the commander-in-chief that he may take the necessary steps for causing it to pass into the enemies' hands. This may be done either by lading several vessels with the cloth, which vessels are to be abandoned by their crews when the enemy comes in sight; or else by means of pedlars who shall hawk the cloth about the country; so that the enemy, hoping to make booty, may gain the plague and find death. The affair must be managed with all circumspection, and the operator must be induced to his work by hopes of gain and by promises, for it will be a dangerous undertaking, and when the operation is over he must go through a rigorous quarantine. While handling the quintessence, it will be of use to the operator to stuff his nose and mouth with sponges soaked in vinegar; and while poisoning the cloth he may fasten the brush to an iron rod, and when finished he must put brush and rod into the fire. Having given the

Turk the plague, every care must be taken to prevent our people coming in contact with them.

"The proposition is a virtuous one, and worthy of the composer of the quintessence. It is, however, a violent course, unusual, and perhaps not admitted by public morality. But desperate cases call for violent remedies, and in the case of the Turk, enemies by faith, treacherous by nature, who have always betrayed your excellencies, in my humble opinion the ordinary considerations have no weight."

To this letter the Presidents of the Ten reply that Foscolo's letter to the Inquisitors has been submitted to them. They thank the *provveditore*, and are of opinion that the doctor who invented the quintessence should be the person who is appointed to take the jar to the commander-in-chief. His travelling expenses are to be paid, and the commander-in-chief must be warned of the great risk to his own troops from the presence of the jar among them. Dr. Salamon, however, showed great unwillingness to sail along with his jar. The Ten insisted; at the same time making ample provision for Salamon and his whole family, and enclosing a supply of poisons for his use. They further insist that the cloth goods are to be poisoned on board the fleet, and not at Zara; and if Salamon absolutely refuses to go, Foscolo is to take the jar and see that it is broken, and its contents emptied into the sea. Foscolo succeeded in overcoming Salamon's objections, and in due time the doctor and his jar of quintessence reached the fleet. He found the commander just going into winter quarters, and unable to make use of the mixture at once. Moreover, the commander declined to keep the jar with him all winter till next spring; so Dr. Salamon and his quintessence were once more shipped on board and returned to Zara, where, to make sure of him and his mixture, both were placed in prison. Next year Foscolo was appointed to the command of the fleet, and immediately asked that Salamon might

be sent to him in Candia, as he desired to try the effect of the mixture which he had so strongly recommended to the Ten. The doctor and his jar were taken out of prison and despatched to Foscolo, but not before two hundred ducats had been exacted from him as caution money. And here the story suddenly ends. We do not know what became of Dr. Salamon, or whether Foscolo found any opportunity of trying his favourite quintessence of plague; probably not, or his period of command was signalled by no very brilliant successes.

The archives of Venice throw light upon many obscure passages in the history of other nations. Some of the most curious documents are those which relate to the various attempts on the lives of the popes.

There is a valuable series of documents relating to the deaths of Popes Alexander VI. and Leo X., both attributed at the time to poison, and both still open questions to-day. The story of the death of Alexander is so well known that it is only necessary to recapitulate it briefly here in order to see how far the facts bear out the generally accepted theory that he was poisoned. Ranke, in the Appendix to his *History of the Popes*, quotes at length the document from Sanudo's *Diaries*, upon which he bases his version of the story. On April 11, 1503, Alexander had poisoned the Venetian Cardinal Giovanni Michiel, in order to become possessed of his great wealth, and before daybreak on the same day the cardinal's house had been swept of its treasures, and everything carried to the Vatican. When the Venetian ambassador presented himself a little later at the palace, he "found all the doors shut, and his Holiness occupied in counting the gold." This deed struck terror into all the other cardinals whose wealth exposed them to the cupidity of the pope. Among the wealthiest of these was Adrian Castellesi, of Corneto, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Accordingly, when Castellesi received a message from the pope that his Holiness



and the Duke of Valentino desired to sup with him in a vineyard of his on August 12, he at once suspected their intention to poison him. He bought the pope's butler, by a present of ten thousand ducats, to tell him which of the boxes of comfits to be served at dessert had been poisoned. The pope and Valentino arrived. The cardinal threw himself at the pope's feet and declared that he would not rise until his Holiness had promised to grant him his request. Alexander, impatient at the scene, and trusting absolutely to his butler's fidelity, consented. Then Castellesi begged leave to wait upon his Holiness with his own hands. When dessert arrived, the butler handed Castellesi the poisoned box, and the cardinal—as was the duty and custom for servants in those dangerous times—first tasted the *confetti*, but, by a juggle, slipped an unpoisoned piece into his mouth, and then placed the poisoned box before the pope. Alexander having seen Castellesi try the box, as he thought, ate freely of the confectionery, went home, was taken ill, and in six days died, a swollen and horrible mass of corruption. Valentino also fell seriously ill, and was in danger of his life for many days; and Cardinal Castellesi, trusting no one, not even himself, when his guests were gone took such violent emetics that he, too, nearly succumbed. Such is the account of the death of Alexander ordinarily received. The story, however, offers one serious difficulty. There were three boxes of *confetti*; only one of these was poisoned, and the pope ate that. How are we to account for the nearly mortal sickness of Valentino? On the whole, though, we shall probably never know the truth of that strange supper party in the Roman vineyard, when the Borgia's hopes and schemes were wrecked for ever. We are inclined to accept the opinion of the Venetian ambassador, based on the professional statement of Dr. Scipio, that the death of the pope and the illness of the duke were due to natural causes.

The same suspicion of poison surrounds the death of Leo X. We shall dwell upon the story at some length because Roscoe clearly had not access to the documents which M. Lamansky has placed before us. The pope was at his villa of Magliana, near Rome, when, on November 24, 1521, news reached him that the imperial troops had entered Milan, and that the success of his league, concluded with the emperor at Worms, was secured. The pope was overjoyed at the news, and the Swiss guard, who were in attendance, began to light bonfires, discharge their guns, sing songs, and generally to celebrate the victory. At the hour for going to bed the pope sent down orders that the noise must stop. But it was found impossible to quiet the men, and his Holiness was unable to sleep all that night. Next morning the pope signified his intention of returning to Rome that afternoon. To pass the time till the hour of departure, he amused himself in a rabbit-warren, where he sat for long enjoying the brilliant sunshine. Thus warmed through and through, he set out for Rome. As the sun set, his Holiness felt chilly, and all the more so as he had only summer garments with him. Nevertheless he entered Rome in excellent spirits, supped, and slept soundly. Next day at audience time he was attacked by fever, and he died on Sunday, December 1. "He died as red as a poppy, and therefore they said he was poisoned."<sup>1</sup> Even before he closed his eyes his bedchamber was sacked by his servants. And then began in Rome the usual scenes that followed a pope's death: artillery mounted on Saint Angelo's castle and pointed on the city; the cardinals barricaded and fortified each in his own palace; the shops all shut; every-

<sup>1</sup> We take this to be the meaning of "*morse come un papavero, et per quello se è poi detto, fu avenenato.*" Ranke's translator gives us "*as fadeth the poppy*"; but we believe our interpretation to be the right one, especially when supported by what follows, "*et vidili el volto negro, come paonaxo scuro, che era segno di veneno.*"

one armed; the streets filled with the "drums and tramlings" of the rival factions; the Jews' quarter sacked; and a bishop and a courtesan shot in the street. Meanwhile, on December 2, the pope's body was laid out in a lower chamber of the Vatican; he was dressed in his episcopal robes, and four torches were placed at the corners of the bier, which was guarded by twenty cardinals clad in purple mourning. The people were admitted to kiss his Holiness's feet. Next day the pope's body lay in state in St. Peter's, in the chapel of Pope Sixtus, and all Rome flocked to see it. After the great doors of the basilica had been closed in the evening by order of the college, on the suggestion of Paris de Grassis, the pope's chamberlain, an autopsy was held upon the body. "The body was found to be of a dark purple colour, which was taken as a sign of poison. The corpse was stripped in the presence of the four doctors and stretched out as they quarter malefactors. When opened, traces of poison were discovered, and the doctors gave it as their opinion that he died therefrom. The body was dressed again by my brother and placed in its coffin, with four bricks under its head; it was then walled into the tomb at the foot of the altar of Pope Innocent." Another authority, however, the letter of Jerome Bon, quoted by Ranke, throws some doubt on the unanimity of opinion among the doctors. "It is not known for certain," he says, "whether the pope died of poison or not. He was opened. Master Ferando says he was poisoned; others thought not; of this opinion is Master Severnio, who saw him opened, and says he was not poisoned." We must remember, however, that Signor Bon had not the advantage of being present at the autopsy in St. Peter's as had the anonymous author whom we quoted. It is highly probable that the pope was poisoned by his butler, Bernabò Malaspina. Paulus Jovius declares that he must have died "*alicujus nobilis*



veneni sævitia"; and finally Leo's chamberlain, who may possibly have been the brother of our anonymous letter-writer, and was in all probability present at the autopsy, tells us that "the doctors gave it for certain that he died poisoned."

It may be worth while to quote, in conclusion, a curious document, the offer made by Celio Malaspina to the Council of Ten. The offer was rejected, it is true, but it casts a strange light on the childlike ingenuousness of the men who made such vast proposals with so little prospect of accomplishing them.

"SERENE PRINCE, ILLUSTRIOUS LORDS,—

"Your faithful servant, Celio Malaspina, says that, in his youth having served many princes, and made the wars with them, he has always observed that they courted, honoured, and rewarded all those who by any rare or conspicuous ability devoted themselves to the conservation of republics and states. He therefore applied himself with diligence to devise some new invention whereby he might be of service to the state and acquire honour and reward in the pay of some prince; and, soldier and professor of war though he was, he perceived that the science of handwriting, by which the whole world is governed and directed, could bring to him that profit and honour which he so ardently desired. To this science accordingly he gave himself up, sparing neither time, trouble, nor fatigue until he had mastered it so thoroughly that the forgery of every kind of handwriting of all conditions of men—an achievement which the world may haply think impossible and incredible—has become for him both easy and certain. He now offers to your Serenity to forge every kind of writing so perfectly that detection shall be impossible. This offer applies to Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, languages with which he is acquainted. The other languages which

he does not know, German, Greek, Slave, Hebrew, and Turkish, he will undertake to forge if an interpreter be supplied him to translate the letters. And because these forgeries would remain incomplete, could we not also forge the seals of letters as we require them, he also offers and promises to find sure and easy means to counterfeit them all.

“Heads declaring succinctly the uses to which this science may be put :

“To sow dissensions and discords between princes, generals, colonels, captains, and other important personages.

“To seize by stratagem many strong places in time of war or peace.

“To delay the assault on a besieged city by throwing doubt on the good faith of generals, officers, and captains.

“To liberate prisoners of importance. To entice the enemy to leave their defences, and so to cut them to pieces.

“To raise money all over the world.

“To govern the votes in the Sacred College, and so to make a pope to your fancy.

“To secure the arrest of any sort of person you choose.

“To upset the marriages of princes and other high personages, and also to assist such marriages.

“To raise troops in an enemy's country.

“To upset treaties by altering and forging despatches, credentials, safe-conducts, and passports.”

“Finally, to ruin all the pashas and other lords in the service of the Grand Turk, rendering them suspect of treachery.

“And all this I would gladly do, first for the service of God, and next for the service of this thrice happy dominion.”

The instances we have quoted will have sufficiently served to show us the nature of the proposals made to

the Council of Ten, and the sort of men who made them. If we turn now to the question of the poisons themselves, the mode of preparing them, and the way to administer them, the documents before us supply abundant information. The number of poison-makers must have been considerable. We come across "*quelli dal venen*," who lived on the Lago di Garda; the famous poison-brewers, Peter Paul of Padua, Master John and Master Michele of Vicenza, and "*nostro fidel Vilandrino*," custodian of the garden of simples at Padua. The poisons which these masters made were of two kinds: slow poisons ("*venini a tempo*") and rapid poisons; and the manner of administering them was various. The method most frequently in use was either poisoned meat or poisoned drink; and we have seen proof made of the "*venenum edibile*" and of the "*venenum potabile*" upon two pigs in the presence of the Ten. There were other modes of poisoning, however, though they were less commonly adopted. We find instances of that favourite Indian receipt pounded diamond. Again, in the year 1585 the French ambassador relates to the college an attempt on the life of the King of France by means of poisoned seals, which had effectually killed three slaves on whom they had first been tried. And in 1499, Caterina Sforza, Lady of Forli, attempted to poison Alexander VI. by means of credentials which her ambassador brought to his Holiness, wrapped in scarlet cloth and placed inside a hollow cane, that they might not kill the bearers. These are cases of poisoning by touch. We hear also of proposals to poison by smell; of little balls to be dropped on a fire which would presently kill all who were in the room.

Nothing strikes us as stranger about these poisons than their inefficacy. In the year 1514 we find Vilandrino, one of the most famous masters of his day, sent for and told that, as the fire at the palace has destroyed the poison cupboard and its receipts, he



must furnish some two or three more, and must send in the receipts along with his new concoctions. Vilandrino produced a poisoned water ; but when this came to be tried on a certain Mustafa, he was none the worse for it. The Ten ordered a second dose ; and after waiting eight days with no more satisfactory results, they conclude in disgust that Vilandrino's water is worth nothing, and send him back to Padua. This general inefficacy of the poisons will appear less strange when the reader has perused the following receipt for a poison, and the instructions as to the mode of administering the drug. It will be obvious that the chief difficulty a poisoner had to face was one which they recognized themselves—the impossibility of getting any of their poisons to stay upon the stomach.

*“ April 21, 1540.*

“ Whoever wishes to sublimate four or five pounds of mixture must have his stove of bricks and a plate with holes in it supported over the stove. He must have five jars, one containing ten litres, another eight, and the rest six ; and he must use the largest the first time, the second largest the next time, and so on. He must have at hand potter's clay and horsehair in equal parts, well mixed together. With the clay and hair let him cover that part of the jar that the fire reaches. Take the powder and put it in the jar ; see that the powder is well ground and mixed. Cover the mouth of the jar, but leave a little hole, so that it can evaporate for an hour ; then close it hermetically with clay. From the top of the stove to the bottom of the jar fill round with clay, so that all the heat may reach the jar. Give it a slow fire for two hours, then increase the heat gradually till four hours, then a stronger fire to six, and a stronger still to nine hours, but not excessive. At that heat continue to twenty-four hours. Lift the jar off the fire, break it, and take what you find in the neck, for that is the good stuff. Have a painter's mixing stone at hand, and grind and

mix well this first sublimation. Put the powder in the second jar of eight litres ; seal its mouth, and place it on the fire ; a hole for evaporation is no more required throughout the operation. Give it fire, as above, for sixteen hours. Lift the jar off ; take what is in the neck and grind it, as above. Repeat the operation with the third jar, leaving it on the fire only twelve hours ; the fourth jar nine hours, and the fifth jar seven hours. Take a round glass flask with a neck that may be hermetically sealed by the glass-blower ; you must tell the man who seals the flask that the substance is volatile, and he will know what to do. The flask must be well washed and dried before anything is put into it. Take the flask with the powder and water in it. Set it on a slow fire of charcoal. Have a light ready, and constantly look into the flask to see if the liquid is boiling ; when it begins to boil, raise it off the fire a little, and keep it at a gentle simmer. If the simmering threatens to stop, add a little fuel. Continue till there remain two or three tumblers full of liquid in the flask. Take out the liquid and place it in a retort whose receiver will contain six tumblers full. Distil the liquid over a slow fire of charcoal. When distilled, place it in a glass jar, seal well with red or green sealing-wax, cover the seal with a piece of kid, and tie tightly.

“ To make two litres of the liquid you require :

Sublimate of silver . . . . .	2 lb.
Arsenic . . . . .	6 <i>grossi</i> . <sup>1</sup>
Realgar . . . . .	6 ”
Orpiment . . . . .	6 ”
Salts of ammonia . . . . .	6 ”
Salts of hartshorn . . . . .	6 ”
Verdigris . . . . .	4 ”

“ All these substances powdered are put in the first sublimation ; in the second you must add four *grossi* of aconite root, fresh-cut if possible ; in the jar that is

<sup>1</sup> A *grosso* is the tenth part of a square inch.

to be sealed you must put ten pounds of water of cyclamen, called in the vulgar sow-bread."

So far for the manufacture of a poison. Here is the way in which one is to be administered :

"The method of administering the poison is this. In every tumbler of wine put a scruple; if you wish to poison a whole flask of wine, one scruple to every tumblerful the flask contains. You must take care, however, that the patient does not drink more than one or two glasses. If he does, he will be sick, and the poison will not have the desired effect. You must know that, should the victim be sick, a violent fever will ensue, and will last five or six days. After the fever passes, he is safe; but on the appearance of the symptom of sickness you must repeat the dose, and continue to do so until he has kept at least one glass on his stomach. The infallible way is the tumbler. The wine-flask sometimes fails; the tumbler never. You must leave no air-hole in the stopper of the jar, otherwise in the space of four hours the whole will evaporate, leaving nothing, zero. I send two qualities—one in a round and the other in a flat jar. If the victim be young and robust, use the round; if he be old, use the other."

After reading such directions as the above, we cannot wonder at the habitual failure to poison. It is evident that the poisons were concocted upon no scientific principles at all, the sole object being to collect into one mixture as many poisonous materials as possible.

About the middle of the sixteenth century the proposals to poison reached the Council of Ten so frequently that they were obliged to institute a separate register in which all such offers were recorded. As we have already seen, there was in the ducal palace a cupboard specially set apart for the poisons which the Ten kept in store. One of the last documents in M. Lamansky's collection relates to the confusion into which this poison cupboard had fallen. It runs thus :



"1755, 16 December. Seeing that the poisonous substances for the service of this tribunal were scattered about among the shelves of the archives, to the great risk of some accident, and that many of these said poisons were grown corrupt through age, and of several neither the nature nor the dose was known, their excellencies, desirous of arranging so delicate matter in the good order necessary for its use and security, have commanded the consignment of all these poisons to a separate casket, in which a book shall be kept to explain the nature and the dose of each one for the guidance of their successors."

And with this document we will close our consideration of the Council of Ten and political assassination. The whole truth is known; nothing further of importance remains to be published on this matter. A few more documents may possibly be discovered, but they will not alter the general aspect of the case. The worst has been said, and at first sight it would seem that no defence is possible. We are tempted to affirm the fierce invective of the French ambassador, and to say that Venice was indeed a "*venenosissima ac resurgens vipera*." And yet upon consideration we think it possible to plead justification—the justification of necessity, which compelled Venice to adopt in self-defence means condemned indeed by the later conscience of mankind, but not absolutely in contravention of the ethical standard of the time, by which alone the Republic can be fairly judged at the bar of history.

## Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus

IN the beautiful Lombardesque Church of San Salvatore, in the right-hand transept looking towards the high altar, is a plain stone slab bearing this inscription: D.O.M. CATHARINÆ CORNELIÆ CYPRI HIEROSOLYMORVM AC ARMENIÆ REGINÆ CINERES.<sup>1</sup> It covers the ashes of Caterina Cornaro, Lady of Asolo, Queen of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Armenia: a daughter of Venice, born in the heyday of Venetian splendour, the close of the fifteenth and the opening years of the sixteenth century. The lust of the eye and the pride of life, the confident, unhesitating assertion of sensuous emotion, were declaring themselves as principles of existence. Venice had won her wealth; she was turning now to the use of it; expanding to the joyous and seductive air, blown from the distant salt sea, bright yet soothing, languid and caressing, penetrating and pervading all with its magical perfume, that stirred the soul and drew it to a very ocean of rapturous delight. She opened her eyes and drank the changeful symphonies of colour that, morning and evening, flamed upon her water-ways. Her artists caught upon their palettes the reflection of sunsets seen from the Zattere, and laid with free hand this glow upon their canvases; her architects evolved a style peculiar to themselves and to Venice, the style of the Lombardi, combining the grace and reserve of the classic model with a richness of colour and a play of

<sup>1</sup> The queen was buried first at the SS. Apostoli. On the restoration of that Church in the sixteenth century the ashes were removed to San Salvatore.

fancy which culminated in masterpieces such as the Ca' Dario, the façade of San Zaccaria, and the portal of the Scuola di San Marco. "Spartam nactus es ; hanc orna." Venice had asked for no Arcadia ; her little Sparta of the mud islands she had claimed, held, made beautiful ; and now, should she not enjoy it ? The pulse of splendid living throbbed through the life of Venice, stimulating alike artist, patrician, and artisan.

If we wish to know what the women of this ample Venetian life looked like, we must turn to the pictures of Titian, Giorgione, and their peers. There, in the Venus of the tribune, large-limbed and golden on the white couch, or in the Flora with full breasts and down-hanging hair, or, higher and better still, in the Madonna of the ecstatic, upraised face, with arms outstretched and breeze-lifted locks, ecstatic, it is true, but not with any super-terrestrial ecstasy—there it is that we shall find them. But should we desire to learn what these women were, not in body only, but in heart and mind ; if it be their daily life we wish to scrutinize, to see them in their homes about their business—we are left but poorly off, and have to be content with such scraps of knowledge and such inward glimpses as may be caught from the comedies of their day, or from the few Venetian novelettes of Bandello and his brother raconteurs.

One thing is clear about their manner of living—this wide luxury, this abundant life, was not for all the women of Venice. A curious calculation<sup>1</sup> has been made from which it would seem that, out of seven hundred noble ladies, not more than sixty or seventy were in the habit of appearing daily in public ; the others remained close shut in their houses, except upon festivals and great public functions. It was the courtesans who freely used and freely enjoyed the diurnal splendour of Venetian habit. They were always *en évidence*, present on the piazza ; their gon-

<sup>1</sup> Yriarte, *La Vie d'un Patricien de Venise* (Paris, Rothschild : s.d.), cap. ii.



dolas to be met out on the lagoons, by San Spirito or the Lido ; their liveries became well known ; their doings and their sayings were the subject of the people's gossip ; round them the popular interest settled. The great ladies remained, for the most part, a shadow and a name ; they were seen once or twice, perhaps, in the year, upon one of those state ceremonies when the noble houses vied with each other in the wealth of jewellery and the richness of the robes worn by their *gentildonne*. But even on such occasions as a ball in the ducal palace, given to some wandering prince, the courtesans held their own, and the more renowned among them were sure of invitations, though, at times like this, the Venetian nobleman took care that, in splendour of dress at least, his mistress should not eclipse his wife.

It was a free and brilliant life that these women led ; they affected a gorgeousness of dress—rich coloured silks or velvets or Eastern stuffs—which distinguished them from the noble lady whose everyday wear was the long and simple black silk *cappa*. Their houses were furnished to the furthest point the sumptuary laws would allow. If a Venetian gentleman desired conversation, wit, music, even such politics as the vigilance of the Ten permitted—all, in short, that we mean by a *salon*—it was to their drawing-rooms that he had to go. It was there, and not in his own house, that he would meet Titian and Sansovino the architect ; or, if he desired a lampoon on his foe, Pietro Aretino, with his daughter Adria. Venice was tuned to a high note of pleasure, and the atmosphere of these drawing-rooms was calculated to delight a trained sensibility ; for many of the women were greatly accomplished—fine musicians ; brilliant talkers ; sometimes, like Veronica Franco, skilled writers of the sonnet and that curious polished verse which says so little and says it so beautifully.

Very different was the lot of the noble ladies. They lived from their girlhood in an Eastern seclusion, as

carefully and as jealously shut away as though they were the inmates of some Turkish seraglio. The Venetian men had imbibed their views on domestic matters from the East; in every department that which touched them intimately was coloured from Byzantium; their deepest-rooted instincts, habits, and forms were Oriental. They did not keep eunuchs as a guard upon their women, it is true; but they had a hundred jealous eyes always on the watch, and no Venetian would think of leaving home for long without a word to some trusted servant.<sup>1</sup> At all events, they took advantage of one fashion in favour among Venetian ladies, and by flattery they induced them to wear a veritable instrument of torture which prevented them from straying far afield; pattens of an enormous size were in vogue, and the mania for increasing the height grew, until at length a lady could not walk without the help of two attendants, on whose shoulders the giantess leaned her hands. One day the French ambassador was in conversation with the doge, and touching on this topic, he remarked that such a fashion must be most incommodious. The doge admitted that no doubt ordinary shoes would be more convenient, when one of the councillors broke in with, "Yes, far, far too *convénient*."<sup>2</sup> The cynical suspicion expressed in this story suggests a far from happy life for nobly born Venetian dames.

The married women were not, however, the chief sufferers in a Venetian household; they saw the world upon the great church feasts or the public ceremonies of state, and on such occasions they received full liberty to indulge their taste for jewellery and dress. But the young girls never stirred outside their doors except to go to mass or confession in the neighbouring *parrocchia*; and then they were jealously followed by some old and faithful nurse, and their beauty care-

<sup>1</sup> The Arsenal museum affords a proof of the extent to which this brutal and insulting suspicion could be carried.

<sup>2</sup> St. Disdier, *La Ville et la République de Venise*, part iii.

fully hidden beneath the long white *fazzuolo*. The young men had to be content with their slight opportunities, and they made the most of them. The loves of many a Venetian story begin with some chance meeting in an aisle, some ardent glances exchanged while waiting for the *padre*, or the touch of a skirt in the narrow *calle* between the house door and the church. This jealous watchfulness was extended to all teachers as well—to music-masters, dancing-masters, governesses. The head of a Venetian household disliked the presence under his roof of any one who was not entirely a dependent. And experience may have taught him that he was right; for, as it was, very often the old and trusted nurse would find her bowels of sympathy too deeply stirred to be withstood, and by hook or crook the lover of the church door or the *calle* would win his way to a meeting, brief perhaps, but bright. But that was a happy fortune not always granted to Venetian maids; and, for the most part, the result of such jealous guarding was that the girl received no sort of education. Nor had she that other feminine resource and occupation of dress; for at home she was confined to the simplest clothing, and not a jewel was given her except, perhaps, a little gold cross or a modest silver chain; a flower from the garden, a carnation or a rosebud, she might put in her hair, just above her ear, but that was all. What else could she think of, then, the long dull day, but a lover or her wedding morning? For marriage meant liberty to her; then she would have music lessons, and a dancing-master, and servants, and a gondola, and invitations to the ducal balls. One occupation she had daily, and that was to sit for hours in the sun upon the housetop,<sup>1</sup> with all her hair drawn out through the top of a crownless straw hat, each lock soaked in unguents and carefully separated so that they fell in a veil all round her head.

<sup>1</sup> The platforms where they sat were called *altane*. See Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti antichi e moderni* (Venezia: 1590), No. 119.



There she sat, bleaching her tresses in the sun till they grew to that glowing Venetian gold. Or in the afternoon girls of her own age and fate might come to keep her company, each with her old *dueña*, who chattered and scolded in the inner court, while they would sit in those little squares of high-walled garden with a cypress rising on either side of the tall, barred gate. Stories they told one another, of what they fancied love was like on the other side of the walls, or floating in a gondola across the moon-lit lagoon. Songs, too, of the nursery, learned in the cradle from those old women whose voices reached them from the courtyard now—

Bona sera ai vivi;  
 E riposo ai morti poveri;  
 Bon viaggio ai naviganti;  
 E bona notte a tutti quanti;

or—

Lei non m' amava, no !

caught from some high-tenored gondolier as he rowed along the little canal below their windows. For occupation they had needlework and prayers, and for amusement games of ball, with forfeits, now and then, if the weather was not too warm, in the large rooms where the balconies hung above the canal. And when the cats were away surely these prisoned mice might play a little, and steal out on to the balcony at the sound of some singing voice they knew; and then bright smiles, and the wave of an arm, and the carnation from the hair thrown down to the hands that waited for it below. And then, sometimes, love would laugh at locksmiths, and balconies seem made for rope-ladders, and night and the small canals are dark, and gondoliers may be found trusty; and a secret marriage would follow, or else a runaway one, and then came tears and scandal, unless, as Bianca Capello did, the girl should end by wedding a grand duke of Tuscany. But these, we may suppose, were rare occurrences, and the life of a Venetian girl of quality

was dull and uneventful, and her one escape, in marriage, did not offer a much brighter prospect. All she could look for were ropes of pearls, the real passion of every Venetian woman, more long and solemn ceremonies, a visit each *la sensa* to the Merceria,<sup>1</sup> where the puppet stood that changed its fashions to the Paris mode every Ascension Day; or, if her husband were a *podestà*, a captain, or *provveditore*, she might hold a little court at Bergamo or Brescia, and have the pleasure of being the greatest lady there.

For Caterina, however, Queen of Cyprus, a more stirring though less placid fate was in store. She was born on St. Catherine's Day, in 1454, the child of Marco Cornaro and Fiorenza, his wife.<sup>2</sup> The Cornari were a very noble Venetian house, and, as so many Venetians did, they tried to heighten their ancestral value by claiming the blood of the Roman Cornelii for their veins. On her mother's side Caterina had, unquestionably, an imperial lineage; her great-grandfather was John Comnene, Emperor of Trebizond. Queen of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Armenia, descendant of the Emperor of Trebizond, mother of the Prince of Galilee—what a curious collection of vague, shadowy, half-real titles! But as yet they lay in the distance, and Caterina was only a little Venetian girl, living the quiet home life of other Venetian maids. We know that at ten years of age she was sent to the convent of the Benedictine nuns in Padua.<sup>3</sup> There we may fancy her, like St. Ursula in Carpaccio's picture, asleep, lying

<sup>1</sup> See Yriarte, *La Vie d'un Patricien de Venise*, cap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Her descent on her mother's side was distinguished (Romanin, *Storia Docum. di Ven.* vol. iv. lib. xi. cap. iii.):

John Comnene.

Valenza = Nicolo Crispo, Duke of Naxos.

Fiorenza = Marco Cornaro.

Caterina, *b.* 1454.

<sup>3</sup> Centelli, *Caterina Cornaro* (Venezia, Ongania: 1892), p. 54.

straight out in her gaunt-posted bed with the old red hangings, the sheet tucked close beneath her chin, where the delicate hand and wrist are nestling; the small, bare room, with a seat or two, the open window where the cool, fresh air blows softly in with the morning light, bowing the heads of the carnation flowers in their pot by the window-sill, bearing on its wings the few and early strokes of the campanile's bell. But the angel that comes through the opened door, bringing those morning dreams that are true, brings not to her, any more than to St. Ursula, tidings of peace.

We cannot now construct a portrait of Caterina with any certainty of likeness. It is impossible to obtain a close view of the queen as she really was; she speaks too seldom in history—indeed, only once, and that when the pain of her life was bitterest upon her. Her contemporaries, however, are agreed to praise her beauty, gentleness, and grace. All that we can do is to sketch her figure upon the wide canvas of her story, catching hints for our study from contemporary chroniclers and artists. We can show her drawn to Cyprus in pride and expectation, wounded there by death and treachery, crushed by Venice of the velvet paws, sinking quietly down the hill of life at last in the sunny seclusion of Castle Asolo.

We must leave Caterina for the present, and turn to the place whither she is surely drifting, to Cyprus and the court of the Lusignan. It was a dark background for Caterina's bright young life to stand relieved against. The kingdom of Cyprus passed, by sale, from Richard Cœur-de-Lion to Guy de Lusignan in 1192. Guy's brother and heir, Almerico, married Isabella, Queen of Jerusalem and Armenia, and thus both these titles became united to that of Cyprus. The crown descended for two centuries through a succession of Ugos, Almericos, and Pierres, till 1426, when King Jan Lusignan was made a prisoner by the Mamelukes of Egypt, and bought his liberty by the promise of an

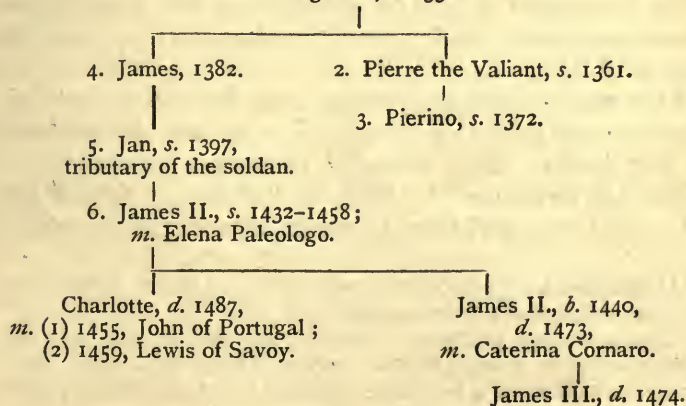


annual tribute to their soldan. Jan was succeeded by his son, John the Second, a man of infirm character,<sup>1</sup> easily led by the women about him, and married, for the second time, to one of singular strength, ambition, and unscrupulousness, Elena Paleologus, daughter of the tyrant of the Morea. The Queen Elena was a woman of that type so often produced by the palace life of Eastern courts. Like Eudoxia, Irene, or Pulcheria, she was mistress of intrigue, and determined to govern both her husband and his kingdom. She brought with her from her home those principles of policy which shrank from no cruelty, which dwelt among the inner chambers of the seraglio, and moved by secret stairs, by venal courtiers, by treachery and poison. When Elena reached the Cyprian court, she found that King John had one child, a bastard boy, called James,<sup>2</sup> the son of his mistress, the beautiful Maria Patras. James was bright, brave, ambitious,

<sup>1</sup> "Vir muliere corruptior," says Æneas Sylvius of him, *op. omnia* (Basileæ: 1551), p. 379. Hen. Giblet (Loredan), *Hist. de' rè Lusignani* (Bologna: 1647), lib. x.

<sup>2</sup> Vianoli, *Historia Veneta* (Venezia: 1680), lib. xix. p. 675: "Restava (James) nella nudità della mera qualità naturale che riceve dalla madre"; Æneas Sylvius, *op. omn. edit. cit.* p. 579: "Natus est magni spiritus adolescens." This is the pedigree of James (Malipiero, *Annali Veneti, Archiv. St. Ital.* vol. vii. part ii.):

1. Ugo IV., s. 1330.



and popular; he had inherited his mother's gift of great beauty, and the king was infinitely devoted to him. There was every probability that, though a bastard, he would be named heir to the crown. The queen, however, gradually asserted her power over her husband; and in the end, by the cold cruelty with which she mutilated Maria,<sup>1</sup> his mistress, she terrified John into complete submission. She saw that if she desired to rule absolutely, she must do so through her own daughter, Charlotte; but first the handsome and beloved James must be removed. Elena would have chosen his death, no doubt, as the surest way to the attainment of her object; but James's excessive popularity rendered such a course too dangerous. She determined, therefore, to destroy his hopes of the throne by compelling his father to appoint him Archbishop of Nicosia. Though the boy could not then have been much more than fifteen years old, he was probably tonsured, consecrated in the four orders, and sent down to the palace of his See. There he led a life of considerable freedom, and indulged in amours and intrigues<sup>2</sup>; but he never failed to attach all those who came near him, by his beauty and his grace. At Nicosia he also became intimately acquainted with the Venetian merchants, and especially with Andrea Cornaro, brother of Marco and uncle to Caterina. This friendship laid the foundation for the closer connection with Venice and for the marriage which was to follow.

The queen, believing that she had disposed of James, now turned her attention to the other half of her design. She intended to seek a husband for Charlotte, to induce the king to abdicate in favour of his son-in-law, and then to reign herself, through her

<sup>1</sup> Queen Elena, with diabolical cruelty, deprived Maria of her nose and ears, and then sent John to visit her.

<sup>2</sup> The queen was constantly attempting his murder, and once he nearly lost his life through the treachery of a favourite servant. But James was born under a lucky star. See Giblet, *op. cit.* lib. x. p. 616.

daughter. Prince John, of the royal house of Portugal, was chosen. He arrived at Cyprus; the marriage was completed, and, under the direction of the queen, John assumed the reins of government. But Elena found in him a man more powerful than suited her purpose. He had resolved to rule, not in appearance only, but in fact. The queen saw her mistake, and corrected it. John was poisoned.<sup>1</sup> It now became necessary to choose a second husband for Charlotte, and this time Elena was more fortunate. Prince John's widow was betrothed to Lewis, a son of the Duke of Savoy, selected because his feeble character and easy temperament made it improbable that he would oppose the queen. But before Lewis could reach Cyprus, Elena died,<sup>2</sup> and the king immediately sent for his bastard son, loaded him with caresses and favours, refused to allow him out of his sight, and showed every disposition to make him resign the mitre for the title of heir apparent: he would certainly have named him Prince of Galilee, had not death cut him short. John followed his wife within a very few months, and Charlotte, who was still waiting the arrival of her husband, was proclaimed queen. James took the oath of allegiance to his sister, and then endeavoured to leave the court in order to return to Nicosia. But his intentions there were suspected, and he was arrested by the constable of the island, detained a prisoner, and some attempt was made to poison him.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to his innumerable friends, and to the strength of the party which preferred a male succession to the crown, James escaped and reached

<sup>1</sup> Æneas Sylvius, *op. omn. edit. cit.* p. 379; Giblet, *op. cit.* lib. x. p. 592.

<sup>2</sup> The queen died in 1458; King John on July 24 the same year. See Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'Île de Chypre*, Doc. vol. iii. No. xiv. The island was most unhealthy: death after death occurred every summer during the heats. See Capo-di-lista's journey to Cyprus, ap. Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Georgio Bustron, MSS. Arund., Brit. Mus. No. 518, fol. 21 v., given by Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* Doc. No. xv.



Nicosia, with every determination to make an effort to unseat his sister. His friend Andrea Cornaro encouraged him with hopes of Venetian aid, feeling sure that the Republic, out of jealousy for Genoa, who had espoused the cause of Charlotte, would gladly win an ascendancy in the island by helping James to the throne. Charlotte, in the greatest alarm, urged Lewis to hasten his coming. The Prince of Savoy passed through Venice, and reached Cyprus before the archbishop could construct any plan of action. James declined to risk his life, and, with the help of the Venetians, he fled to Alexandria, to the court of the soldan, the titular superior of the Cyprian crown.

There James pleaded his sex, always a powerful argument in the Eastern mind, and excused his illegitimacy, which Oriental nations have seldom considered a bar to succession. He further urged upon the soldan that a crown tributary to him was being disposed of without his advice or consent. James is also said to have made a formal recantation<sup>1</sup> of Christianity in order to clinch the favour of the Mahomedans. The document was eventually sent to Pius II., and became one of the reasons why the Holy See always showed itself so hostile to James. But there is very little doubt that the whole of this episode of the recantation, as well as the document produced to attest it, was nothing but a forgery by the knights of Rhodes, who were warm partisans of Charlotte. Whether the archbishop ever signed such a monstrous deed or not, his success at the soldan's court proved complete. His beauty helped him to the favour of all who heard him plead his case, and the charm of his manner created a *furore* on his behalf. In the hall of the palace and surrounded

<sup>1</sup> The document is a curious one, and is given by Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 110. Æneas Sylvius also refers to it, *op. omn. edit. cit.* p. 580. One or two phrases will show its character: "Et negabo deitatem, et adorabo humanitatem," "luxuriabor cum hebreis super altare," etc.

by his mamelukes, the soldan ordered James, then twenty-two years old, to be robed and crowned King of Cyprus,<sup>1</sup> and adopted him as his own son. From his new father James received a convoy of ships and a detachment of mamelukes; with these he sailed to claim his kingdom. He landed at Cyprus, and city after city fell or yielded without a struggle. Only two castles, those of Famagosta and Cerines, made any resistance, but they presently surrendered. Lewis fled from Cyprus and returned to his father's court. The Queen Charlotte withdrew first to Rhodes, and then to Rome, there to implore the aid of Pope Pius against her brother and his infidel allies.

James was firmly placed upon the throne. But he saw arrayed against him the Genoese, whom he had expelled from the island, the Duke of Savoy, in the interest of Charlotte, and the pope, who refused to acknowledge his title and had received his ambassadors with very scant courtesy. He could look for no sure support from the soldan, who was more likely to seize Cyprus for his own than to undertake wars in defence of James. It was imperative that the king should find an alliance elsewhere, and marriage seemed the easiest method for cementing one. The preponderance in Cyprus could not fail to be a tempting dowry, and the chief competitors for King James's hand were Naples, Venice, and the prince of the Morea. Venice at first advised James to seek an alliance with Andrea Paleologus, despot of the Morea, but difficulties were raised at Rome, where Pius refused to recognize James as King of Cyprus. James's old friend Andrea Cornaro then pointed out to him that the Republic was his firmest support,

<sup>1</sup> For the success of James at Alexandria, see Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. Doc. p. 99, ad ann. 1460; Æneas Sylvius, *op. et edit. cit.* p. 579; Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 596; Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi*, ap. Muratori, *Rer. It. Scrip.* tom. xxii. p. 1185; Navagero, *Storia Veneziana*, ap. Murat. *op. cit.* tom. xxiii.

and that it was to her he should contract himself. Andrea therefore proposed a match between the king and his own niece, Caterina Cornaro. A romance has been made out of the circumstances of this suggestion. It is said that one day Andrea dropped upon the floor a miniature of Caterina; the king picked it up, and the picture was so lovely that he became deeply enamoured of the original. But Andrea played with him, concealing the name and pretending that the portrait was that of his mistress, until he had worked the young man to a frenzy of passion.<sup>1</sup> Then he told James that this was in truth Caterina his niece, to be won only as Queen of Cyprus. However that may be—and it is more probably romance than truth—whether James was moved by love alone or more by policy, he sent his ambassador Podocataro to Venice to ask the hand of a Venetian noble damsel as his queen. Probably thanks to the influence of the Cornaro family in Cyprus, the choice fell on Caterina. The Senate gladly accepted the offer in the name of Venice. They further promised to adopt the bride as a daughter of the Republic, that her birth might in no way fall below that of her husband, and added a fitting dowry of one hundred thousand ducats.

The contract was signed on November 10, or 30, 1468, by the doge, Cristoforo Moro, on the one hand, and Filippo Mastachelli, James's proxy, on the other. The ceremony<sup>2</sup> of the betrothal took place in the hall of the Great Council. Forty noble ladies went to the Palazzo Cornaro to bring the bride to the ducal palace. There she was received by the doge, the council, the senators, and state officials. A consecrated ring was placed on Caterina's finger

<sup>1</sup> Daru, *Storia della Repub. di Venezia* (Capolago: 1837), lib. xvii. p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> See Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. Doc. p. 182. He gives a fragment of an anonymous chronicle at present in the National Library, Paris. The author is in complete accord with Malipiero, already cited.



by Mastachelli, and Cristoforo Moro formally gave her away to James Lusignan. Then, with all the ceremony and incidents of royalty, her court reconducted her to her palace at San Polo.

But her passage to Cyprus was delayed. A hitch occurred in the negotiations, and for the next four years Caterina remained at Venice, treated as a queen by her fellow-citizens, but more than doubtful whether she would ever wear the crown of Cyprus. For Ferdinand of Naples had been secretly endeavouring to detach James from his Venetian engagements, and strongly recommending a match with a daughter of his own house. He had agents at work for him in Cyprus—Lewis Fabrice, a Catalan, who had been created Archbishop of Nicosia in spite of all the efforts of Venice to prevent the nomination, and Marin Rizzo, the king's chamberlain. James wavered between the Neapolitan and the Venetian alliance, and showed his coldness towards the latter by quarrelling with Andrea Cornaro, uncle of his *fiancée*.<sup>1</sup> The Republic, however, determined to hold the king to his engagements. The government sent an ambassador to the Cyprian court to explain that Venice would make the rupture of this match a public question; further, to urge James not to disgrace his royal word, solemnly given by his own ambassador, nor yet to put this slight upon the queen already pledged to him. Venice promised to take the island under her protection whenever the king should fulfil his contract. The attitude of Caterina's guardian and his own personal inclination determined James to abandon the Neapolitan connection. In 1471 his representatives were sent to Venice to bring his queen to Cyprus. There still remained one ceremony to be performed: Caterina was brought from her palace to the Church of St. Mark, and there, before the high altar, the doge on July 14, 1472,

<sup>1</sup> Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. Doc. pp. 307, 310, 311, 312, and 316; Romanin, *op. cit.* vol. iv. lib. xi. cap. iii.

adopted her as a child of the Republic.<sup>1</sup> She was now no longer a Cornaro, but Caterina Veneta Lusignan, a daughter of Venice. Venice took the parents' vows for her child; we shall see how well she kept them.

Great rejoicing followed in the city, and, as a bystander remarked, "it seemed to each and all that the Signory had won a kingdom, as, by God's good grace, did actually happen."<sup>2</sup> In September of 1472 the Bucentaur came once more for Caterina, to speed her on her way to her new kingdom. In cloth of gold and regal train she appeared on the steps of her palace; the doge gave her his right hand, and side by side they seated themselves upon the daïs, while the great boat moved slowly down the grand canal and out to the Lido, where the admiral of the fleet was waiting with the ships that were to carry her to Cyprus and her home.

Caterina was eighteen years old. We have no portrait at all of her at this turning-point in her life, though the Senate is said to have commissioned a certain *Dario di Trivigi pittor chiarissimo* to paint one as a present for King James; and though there is hardly a gallery of note in Europe that does not boast a likeness of the queen, it is very doubtful whether any, save one, is an authentic portrait from the life. Gentile Bellini is supposed to have represented Caterina in the person of the stout lady who heads the kneeling line of noble ladies in the picture of "The Miracle of the Cross," now in the Accademia at Venice; but the picture is dated MCCCCC., Caterina was therefore in her forty-sixth year, and in fact the figure is that of a matron long passed the prime; nor is it probable that Caterina sat to the painter for a single figure in a crowded canvas; moreover, she was

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *loc. cit.* July 14, 1472; Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, pp. 597, 598.

<sup>2</sup> Paolo Morosini, *Historia della Città di Venetia* (Venetia: 1637), lib. xx.

then living at Asolo, and rarely came to Venice. The life-size Buda-Pest portrait, also by Gentile Bellini, resembles the likeness in the Venetian picture in the dressing of the hair and the arrangement of the jewellery, and may possibly be a portrait from the life. Caterina is represented as a woman of about forty-five, and hardly shows traces of sufficient beauty to justify Sanudo's "è bella donna." Paolo Veronese's portrait in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna certainly gives us a handsome woman of the large Venetian type, gorgeously dressed, wearing a crown, but showing little resemblance to the more convincing Bellini portraits. The best-known portrait is undoubtedly the picture attributed to Titian, now in the Uffizi at Florence. Caterina, if it be Caterina, is standing up in a rich purple robe and cloak of green embroidered in gold; she has a crown and veil on her head; her two hands clasped fall down in front of her. She is tall, youthful, slight in figure; graceful in pose, with a sprightly expression, witty mouth, and happy countenance; too young for Titian to have painted her thus from the life. Moreover, the dress does not agree with Ridolfi's statement that Titian painted the queen in widow's weeds. It seems that Titian did talk of painting Caterina as Saint Catherine, but after her death; and the Uffizi picture may be the original or more likely a copy of this canvas. The Dorchester House and Apsley House portraits belong to this same category. If we are to trust Vasari, Giorgione did actually paint the queen from the life, "ritrasse ancora di naturale Caterina Regina di Cipro, qual viddi io già nelle mani del clarissimo Messer Giovanni Cornaro." It is possible that this was the case, though chronology again renders it unlikely. Anyhow, the picture had disappeared even in Vasari's day. "Non si sa," he says, "qual fortuna abbia avuto."<sup>1</sup>

The most authentic likeness of the queen is the picture in the possession of the Count Ayogadro degli

<sup>1</sup> Centelli, *op. cit.* pp. 131-48.



Azzoni at Treviso. It seems to have come directly into the family of the Avogadro by the marriage of Rambaldo to Fiammetta Buccari, one of the queen's maids-of-honour, to whom Caterina gave the portrait as a wedding present. The painter is unknown, and as a work of art the picture is of no great merit. It bears an inscription recording the gift, and giving the date MD., when Caterina was forty-five years old. She is represented in mourning, with a crown on her head, and the fine gold chain with pearl ornaments round her neck which appear in the two Bellini portraits. The expression is kindly and witty. Difficulties of chronology would seem to leave us with the Avogadro portrait and the two Bellini pictures as our only authentic presentments of the queen.<sup>1</sup>

Caterina reached Cyprus, and one brief year of quiet and of happiness was given to her. Then James died in the July heats of 1473, from a fever caught out hunting. He was only thirty-three years old, and the enemies of Venice did not hesitate to say that the fever was the result of Venetian poisons.<sup>2</sup> Between the foes of the Republic at the Roman court, who bring this charge, and her friends, who as strenuously deny it, we cannot now decide. The young king died and left his wife with child. For other offspring there were three illegitimate children, two sons, Eugenio and Giovanni, and one daughter named Zarla, a contraction for Charlotte. By his will<sup>3</sup> James bequeathed his kingdom to his queen and the child that should be born of her. He appointed a commission of seven nobles, including Andrea Cornaro, to advise and support Caterina. On her death the crown was to descend to her child, with reversion to each of

<sup>1</sup> See Molmenti, *op. cit.* part ii. p. 494, note 3, pp. 516-19.

<sup>2</sup> Sismondi (*Rep. Ital.* cap. xxviii.) quotes Raynaldus, *Ann. Eccles.*, as the authority for the poisoning.

<sup>3</sup> Giorgio Bustron, *Chron.*, MSS. Arund., Brit. Mus. No. 518, fol. 69 v<sup>o</sup>., the Will of James; Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. Doc. p. 445; Sanudo, *op. cit.* p. 1197.

his bastard sons in order of birth, and then to his bastard daughter, in case the legitimate line should fail. The constitution of the queen's council did not give much promise of peace, for it contained such antagonistic elements as Andrea Cornaro, the Venetian, and Marin Rizzo, and John Fabrice, brother of the Archbishop of Nicosia, both of whom we have already seen engaged by Ferdinand of Naples to break the match between James and Caterina.

Her troubles were beginning to close around the queen. No child had yet been born; and Cyprus was almost an open prey, lying ready to the swiftest or the strongest arm. Caterina, only nineteen years old, saw enemies on every hand. The Cypriot nobles were jealous of Venetian ascendancy, and the archbishop had little difficulty in persuading them to think favourably of Ferdinand's pretensions as the surest counterbalance to the influence of the Republic. Venice, as Caterina perhaps surmised, would never hesitate to take her kingdom from her when the moment came. But just now the government was engaged in a close and single-handed struggle with the Turk; Venice had lost Negropont (1470), next year was to witness the heroic defence of Scutari, and Europe was presently to experience the shock of seeing the Turks before Otranto. So for the present Caterina might look for help and advice from her home, knowing that if the Venetians were themselves unable to occupy the island, they would never willingly allow another power to do so. There was yet a third danger besetting the queen: Charlotte renewed her claim to the throne as the sole legitimate Lusignan.

On August 28, 1473, a child was born to Caterina, and called James after his father. As grandson of the Republic, his sponsors at the font were Mocenigo, the admiral, and the two *provveditori*<sup>1</sup> of the fleet. By the will of James, the birth of this boy should have

<sup>1</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 599; Ceppio Coriolan, *De Petri Mocenici gestis*, lib. ii.

settled all claims to the throne. But no sooner had the Venetian fleet sailed away than the Archbishop of Nicosia, who had been maturing his plans with the King of Naples, rose in revolt. His scheme was to marry Alfonso, a bastard of Naples, to Zarla, James's illegitimate daughter. To carry out this design the archbishop, the Counts of Tripoli and Jaffa, with Marin Rizzo, all three of whom had been named of the council by James, seized on the city of Famagosta, where Caterina was lying, recovering from childbirth. The town was roused by the uproar in the middle of the night. The conspirators forced their way into the palace; Gabriel Gentile, the queen's physician, fled for safety to Caterina's own chamber, whither he was pursued by Marin, and, like David Rizzio, slain in the very arms of the queen. Her uncle Andrea and her cousin Marco Bembo were both stabbed under the walls of the castle, and their naked bodies thrown into the moat, where they lay many days within sight of the queen's windows, nor dared she take them up to bury them until they were half eaten by the dogs. The conspirators carried the young boy James away from his mother, and Alfonso was proclaimed Prince of Galilee. Caterina, herself a close prisoner, they compelled to write a letter to the Venetian Senate, explaining that the murder of her uncle and her cousin was due to some private quarrel between them and the soldiers whose pay they had withheld.<sup>1</sup> But the

<sup>1</sup> Nov. 15, 1473. See despatch of Giosafat Barbaro to the doge, Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. Doc. p. 352. Barbaro gives an account of the events of that night: "Questa note preterita, cerca a hore XI., essendo nel letto, premeditando molte e diverse cose, aldiati verso la piazza uno inusato son de campana . . . per la qual cossa chiamai suso el mio fameglio e disili chel sè dovesse far a la fenestra e star attento se el sentiva remor alguno, sentando mi ulular e latrar assaissimi cani." Roman. *loc. cit.* Letter of Senate to Angelo de Adria, Jan. 22, 1474: "Ma in la camera propria in conspecto di quella povera zoveneta taglioro a pezzi il suo proprio medico e un altro suo servitor e domestico. . . . Tolsero la cassa e le zoie, l'anello del sigilo e l'obbligarono a scriver lettere ai castellani di ceder loro



Venetian consul sent home a true account of how matters stood, and orders were despatched to Mocenigo to sail at once for Cyprus, where he was to secure by any means the safety of Caterina and her son.<sup>1</sup> Mocenigo, however, had forestalled his instructions, and had already sent the *provveditore* Soranzo to the island, promising himself to follow. When Soranzo reached Cyprus, he found the conspirators quarrelling among themselves, while the people of Famagosta and Nicosia had risen for the queen, and were clamorously demanding her liberation. On the approach of Mocenigo the chief conspirators fled. Order was restored and many executions followed. In obedience to injunctions from Venice, the forts were put into the hands of men wholly devoted to the Republic. A review of all arms took place before the queen at Famagosta, as a display of power and a warning to the disaffected; and, in reward for his services, Caterina presented Mocenigo with a golden shield, emblazoned with the arms of Lusignan. Quiet was apparently secured, and the Venetian admiral sailed away.

But Venice was beginning to lay her hand upon Cyprus; by this protection of the queen she established a right to a voice in the government of that island. In March of the following year the Senate appointed a *provveditore* and two councillors as permanent residents to assist Caterina in her government.<sup>2</sup>

Trouble on trouble pursued Caterina. In August, 1474, her boy died of fever. He was only one year old; and again the charge of Venetian poisoning was

le fortezze." Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 600; Ceppio Coriolan, *De Petri Mocenici gestis*, lib. iii.; Sabellico, *Historia Veneta*, Dec. iii. lib. ix.; Navagero, *op. cit.* p. 1138.

<sup>1</sup> Despatch of Senate to Mocenigo, Dec. 20, 1473, Secreti, xxvi. fol. 58; Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Secreti, xxvi. fol. 79; Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 370; Romanin, *loc. cit.*

renewed, but the more obvious and more probable cause of his death was the deadly malaria<sup>1</sup> of the coast region. Caterina wrote to the Senate, telling them of her loss; and orders were given that her father, Marco Cornaro, should go to Cyprus,<sup>2</sup> nominally to comfort his daughter and to bear the condolence of the Republic, really to act as Venetian agent in conjunction with Giovanni Soranzo, their *provveditore*, in checking any revolt which might follow on the death of young James Lusignan. This dread of revolution was not groundless. When her nephew died, Charlotte renewed her claim to the throne, and many of the Cypriot noblemen declared for her as the last true Lusignan. She was a brave, determined woman, with the courage and the resource of her mother Elena. When the boy died, she was at the court of the Soldan of Egypt, urging her legitimacy, as her brother James had urged his manhood and his beauty. Charlotte further promised, if the soldan helped her to the crown, that she would pay in full the annual tribute, which Caterina had allowed to fall into arrears. Venice was not at that moment able to undertake the defence of Cyprus against Charlotte and the soldan, but by diplomacy she succeeded in cutting the ground from under the ex-queen's feet. The *provveditore* was instructed to advise Caterina to send an embassy to the Alexandrian court with the tribute which was wanting,<sup>3</sup> and to excuse the delay on the score of the ravages committed by the locusts. The Venetian *provveditore* and two councillors, who had been appointed nominally to assist the queen, but in reality to govern Cyprus and direct its policy, dictated the terms of the apology. Caterina obeyed; her embassy was favourably received in Egypt, and Charlotte was dismissed. But she refused to cease her efforts. She returned to Italy,

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *op. cit.* lib. xi. cap. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Nov. 11, 1474, Secreti, xxvi. fol. 152; Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 398.

<sup>3</sup> Secreti, xxvi. fol. 138; Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 391.

and continued to urge the Dukes of Milan and Savoy, the Genoese, and the pope to lend her their aid. Letters written by her to Genoa were intercepted and sent to Venice.<sup>1</sup> They disclosed a scheme for a descent on Cyprus already far advanced. The Venetian government ordered their admiral, Antonio Loredan, the hero of Scutari, to garrison the forts on the island,<sup>2</sup> and to arrest and send to Venice Maria Patras, the mother of James, along with his three bastard children. The marriage between young Alfonso of Naples and Zarla Lusignan, which formed the basis of the archbishop's plot in 1473, had never been completed; and the Republic saw that if they held the young girl and her two brothers in their power, they would have one difficulty the less in this delicate business of keeping all other powers out of Cyprus till they themselves were ready to absorb it. Their orders were obeyed as promptly as though the kingdom were in fact already a province of their empire. Loredan sent the children to Venice. But Alfonso refused to renounce the marriage which had been arranged with Zarla. He pursued her to Venice, and, with the help of his father Ferdinand, he nearly succeeded in carrying her off by stealth.<sup>3</sup> The Venetians replied by sending the child to Padua, where she soon afterwards died of the plague,<sup>4</sup> as was said. Alfonso was balked; but his father would not allow him to abandon the game, and in 1478 he sent him to the court of the soldan. Once more Caterina was obliged to pay the deficient tribute. This time, however, Venice instructed her to demand a formal act of investiture<sup>5</sup> in return for the discharge of her

<sup>1</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 607.

<sup>2</sup> Council X., Misti, fol. 175; Mas Latric, *loc. cit.* p. 408, Oct. 30, 1476; Rom. *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Navagero, *op. cit.* p. 1156.

<sup>4</sup> Council X., Misti, xviii. fol. 182; Jan. 16, 1477; Mas. Latric, *loc. cit.* p. 412.

<sup>5</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 605, where the deed is given in full.



debt. The diploma came back to the court of Cyprus, and Alfonso's mission failed. He wearied of this chase after a wife and a crown ; he was glad to find himself beyond the reach of his father's restless ambition ; Alexandria was to his taste, and he gave himself up to the pleasures of the town.<sup>1</sup>

External danger seemed at an end for the present. But the continual pressure of hostility, the rapid and repeated blows of destiny, had shattered the royalty of Caterina's state. Her tenure of the throne hung upon the fine thread of Venetian pleasure ; her tenure of life depended upon an equation between the strength of the Venetian garrison and the force or cunning of the Cypriot nobles belonging to the Aragonese party. The queen's household, her movements, her very income, now limited to eight thousand ducats, were under the direction of the *provveditore* and his councillors. The doge has to order them not to hold the reins so tight, but to allow the queen to move from one palace to another, and to see that her table is properly supplied.<sup>2</sup> Her liberty was gone ; it was hardly possible that she could, by any course of conduct, satisfy the government which intended eventually to unthroner her. One thing she certainly might not do ; she must never dream of a second marriage. It might have been some consolation to Caterina had the Venetian domination secured to her peace. But there was no rest inside her island kingdom. The citizens, the people of Cerines, Famagosta, Nicosia, were faithful to her ; they loved their queen. But all through the island the great nobles were her enemies, and drew with them their peasants. They were profoundly jealous of Venetian rule ; they saw the weakness of the queen ; some of them coveted the throne for themselves. Caterina was constrained to live in constant dread of revolution, murder, or

<sup>1</sup> Romanin, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Colbertaldi, *Hist. di Cat. Cornara*, MS. cod. viii. It. alla Marciana.

dethronement, shut within the walls of one or other of her faithful towns. Conspiracy after conspiracy was discovered, some directed against her life, others against her liberty. At each new outbreak she could see the frown gathering upon her parent's brow. The dread of Venice was always before her eyes. Yet she was absolutely helpless; never was a queen more so; caught between rebellious subjects whom she could not rule and a cold, uncompromising guardian who desired her kingdom. For the better protection of Caterina, Venice, in 1477, had proposed to send a colony of one hundred Venetian nobles<sup>1</sup> to the island. They were to receive large fiefs and a salary of three hundred ducats each. But when the commissioners sent to prepare the draft of the scheme came to examine the Cyprian exchequer, they had to report that it would not bear this additional charge. The design accordingly fell through. The government, however, continued to appoint governors, captains, treasurers, *provveditori*<sup>2</sup>; occupying every post at court and every fort in the island. Each new arrival from Venice deepened the hatred of the Cypriot nobles and increased the danger to Caterina's life. The pain of her position was so great that she may well have wished for the end; but that was to be delayed for many years yet; and, when it did come, it proved to her the bitterest experience of all her bitter fate. For ten years more she lived on in Cyprus, feeling her life daily curbed and crushed between her subjects and her guardians. Young, beautiful, and unhappy, called to a government beyond her powers, the fate of Caterina recalls to us the equally disastrous lot of that other lovely, hapless, and abandoned lady, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots.

In all probability the *provveditori* were acting on distinct instructions from Venice; their conduct and

<sup>1</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, pp. 606, 607.

<sup>2</sup> Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. appendix, p. 841.

the ambitious designs of the Republic point to that conclusion. Quarrels and recriminations took place between the Venetian officials and the Cornaro family represented by Marco, who espoused the cause of his daughter, though he protested to the government that he remained a faithful subject—*Marco è Venetian*. He complained that the queen was exposed to all sorts of humiliations, especially by one of the councillors, who seemed inclined to be *non consigliere ma signore e governador*. They compelled her to take her meals in her own chamber *sora uno deschetto, longo un braccio ; non ha se non tre over quatro garzoni in casa et un spendador*; then he bursts out, "I swear to your Serenity that any one of my daughters is better treated in her house than is the queen." Caterina herself follows with a letter complaining that she is forbidden to write or to receive correspondence; Soranzo, the *provveditore*, is attempting to make himself *signore e governadore de questo nostro regno*; while Pasqualigo, who succeeded Soranzo, *me uxo parole che se avesamo robato la caxa sua et la sua facultà promettimo a la Nostra Signoria non aia usato ste parole*. Finally, in 1475, the *spendador*, the butler, was found to have attempted the life of Marco Cornaro by poisoning a fowl destined for his table. On the other hand, the Venetian officials report that Marco *voria esser il tutto et nui niente*, and accuse him of aiming at shaking off dependence on Venice. "Io crepo," writes Diedo, "sentir ogni hora per ogni lettera li deportamenti di questo novo re. . . . Per Dio, provedassi, provedassi, non dirò altro più, perchè voria poter far et non dir." Clearly the situation between Venice and the Cornaro in Cyprus was becoming intolerable. But the severe, nay, cruel treatment of Caterina by the Republic, and the obvious intention of Venice to absorb the island, rallied the islanders to the side of their queen; a change of attitude, faithfully reported home by the *provveditore*, took place. Venice was not ready yet to take the final step, and in 1479



she ordered her officials to relax their vexatious policy.<sup>1</sup>

At length, in 1488, the time seemed ripe for the annexation of Cyprus. Venice only required a pretext, and that was soon offered to her by two events of this year. The Sultan Bajazet II. intended to subdue the mamelukes of Egypt, and had prepared a large force for the purpose. The Venetians surmised that, on the way, he would seize Cyprus as a base of operations. They determined to remove the queen, and their action was hastened by the discovery of a plot. Marin Rizzo, the old conspirator of 1473, had met Alfonso of Naples at Alexandria. Rizzo suggested that Alfonso should sue for the hand of Caterina, and rely on his father Ferdinand for support. To pave the way for this match, Rizzo sailed for Cyprus in a French ship. He intended to sound the queen on the subject, and took with him Tristan Giblet, whose sister was waiting-maid to Caterina. The two landed at Fountain Amorous, and told the master of the galley to cruise off shore till he should see, up on the headland, a fire signal raised by night. The Venetian admiral Priuli, however, was aware of the whole design. He seized the Frenchman, and, after learning the hour at which the signal might be looked for, he manned the galley with his own sailors and sent it towards the Fountain Amorous. All went well; the fire was lighted and answered; Rizzo and Giblet came on board, and were arrested by Priuli's men.<sup>2</sup> Both were sent to Venice, but Giblet poisoned himself on the way. Rizzo was kept in close and secret confinement; the Ten hesitated to condemn him to death, as he pleaded that he was ambassador of the soldan.<sup>3</sup> Finally, however, a year later, he was strangled secretly in the armoury of the Council of Ten.

<sup>1</sup> See Centelli, *op. cit.* pp. 87-95.

<sup>2</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 609; Navagero, *op. cit.* p. 1197.

<sup>3</sup> Mas Latrie, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 435-44; extracts from the Chron. of Marin Sanudo, Council X. May 13, 1489; Rom. *loc. cit.*

The discovery of this last plot determined the Venetian government to act. Venice could never permit a second marriage, which would have destroyed the shadowy title of heir to her daughter which she now claimed. On October 28, 1488, the Ten arrived at their final decision that Caterina should be recalled; and Priuli was instructed to carry out their orders as firmly, yet as gently, as might be,<sup>1</sup> only under no circumstances was he to fail. "We fully authorize you to bow her to our will, with or without her own consent." In case of refusal, he was to inform her Majesty that she had forfeited all claim to the protection of the Republic, and, as a consequence, her income would be suspended and herself treated as a rebel. On obtaining her consent, Priuli was to affirm everywhere that the queen had taken this action of her own free will, and not on any compulsion from Venice. Giorgio Cornaro was also commissioned to accompany Priuli to Cyprus,<sup>2</sup> where he was to assist the general in compelling his sister to resign. And both were told how to act in case they found Caterina already fled to Rhodes, a design the unfortunate queen, in her terror, was suspected of harbouring.<sup>3</sup> Venice had closed her hand, and it always proved a strong one. Giorgio arrived in Cyprus, and found no pleasant or easy task before him. He had to encounter the strongest repugnance to his proposals—tears, entreaties, even, as we have seen, thoughts of flight; so closely did the queen cling to her kingdom and her shadowy semblance of a royal state. "Is it not enough," she said, "that Venice shall inherit when I am gone?"<sup>4</sup> No, it was not enough; abdication complete and at once was demanded of her. Promises

<sup>1</sup> "Ultraque omnia, utemini erga majestatem suam omnibus illis dulcibus, humanis, placabilibus et gratiosis verbis que judicaveritis posse operari effectum hujus nostre intentionis."

<sup>2</sup> Misti, xxiv. fol. 29; Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 420.

<sup>3</sup> Misti, xxiv. fol. 34; Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> Bembo, *Historia Veneta* (Basileæ: 1556), lib. i.

of a regal reception, of princely treatment, of recognition as a crowned head, of a large income, of fiefs in the Veneto, were lavishly made to her, only she must obey. Giorgio had to resort to threats. "Non volendo venir," he had to tell his sister; "sapiate la Signoria a el zeneral con l' armada qui vi leverà per forza, perderà la gratia de la Signoria et nui saremo ruinati."<sup>1</sup> At last she yielded. The abdication took place at Famagosta on February 26, 1489. In the piazza of Famagosta and of Nicosia solemn *Te Deums* were sung, the flag of the Lusignan was lowered, and the banner of St. Mark blessed and unfurled, while the queen looked on from beneath a baldachino. She saw her cities taken from her one by one, the cities that had always been her own. No point in all the long ceremony of unrobing was spared her; in every town and village the same cruel pageant was performed. She entered each one as a queen and left it discrowned. Venice was determined that all the world should see how willing had been her abdication. But the people flocked about her on her mournful progress with tears and blessings—tears for their liberty lost with their queen. At last, on March 19, 1489, it was finished. Caterina and her brother sailed for Venice, and Cyprus became a part of the Venetian empire.

The government prepared an excellent constitution<sup>2</sup> for the island. Venice never failed in that respect. A lieutenant, the supreme governor, with two councillors, was established at Nicosia; a captain, or deputy-governor, also with two councillors, was sent to Famagosta; to these were added a military governor or *provveditore*.<sup>3</sup> But the Venetian title to the island had no legal ground. James Lusignan, Caterina's husband, was a usurper; Charlotte, his legitimate sister, was the real queen, and it is in

<sup>1</sup> Centelli, *op. cit.* p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 611; Navagero, *op. cit.* p. 1197.

<sup>3</sup> Mas Latrè, *op. cit.* vol. iii. appendix, p. 844.



virtue of her claim that the house of Savoy still bears the empty title of King of Cyprus. But, further, admitting James's title as good, the succession to the crown should have been governed by his will, which bequeathed it, after the death of his last bastard, to the nearest of the blood of Lusignan. In truth, the Republic had no title; she desired Cyprus and took it. It never brought her any good; it is even said to have worked much harm to her social morality, for the island was the home of a deep-seated luxury. Its influence, no doubt, did help to heighten the corruption which was then beginning to appear at Venice. The opening of the next century saw the establishment of many offices,<sup>1</sup> each, however, more powerless than its neighbour, to check the extravagance of the dress, the licence of the monasteries, the rapid growth of vice, the decay of health and spread of infectious diseases. With much trouble and expense Venice held Cyprus for a little less than a century, and then lost it to the Turks in 1571.

On June 5, 1489, Caterina's galley reached the Lido. There she landed under an awning of gold and crimson stripes. She was conducted to a chamber prepared for her at San Nicolò, where she might rest and prepare for the ceremony of the next day. On the 6th the doge, accompanied by a train of noble ladies, came to wait on her and lead her to the Palazzo Ferrara,<sup>2</sup> now the Fondaco dei Turchi, where her lodging had been made ready at the public expense. But when the *Bucentaur* neared the Lido, a *burasco* blew down, and so disturbed the ladies that their condition seemed likely to destroy the stateliness of the occasion. The doge therefore ordered the anchor to be dropped, and waited till the wind went by. When the sea had subsided, Caterina

<sup>1</sup> The following offices may be noted: the *provveditore alle pompe*, 1514; *contra bestemmia*, 1537; *sopra monasterj*, 1521; *della sanità*, 1485-1556.

<sup>2</sup> The building occupied by the Museo Civico.

was brought on board the barge; she was dressed in black velvet with a veil and jewels *alla Zipriota*, as we see her kneeling in Bellini's picture, "The Miracle of the Cross." The procession moved up the Grand Canal, and as it passed the Palazzo Cornaro, Giorgio received the honour of knighthood from the doge as a reward for his services in persuading his sister to abdicate. Then followed long banquets, and three days of ceremony in the Ferrara palace.<sup>1</sup> But one last function yet remained to be performed before the Republic would let the Queen of Cyprus go. At St. Mark's, in the very place where, eighteen years before, Venice had adopted Caterina as her child, she now set the seal of the Church to her spoliation. The queen was forced to go through the long office of a second and more solemn abdication. Then the government invested her, for life only, with the Castle of Asolo<sup>2</sup> in the Marca Amorosa, the Trevisan march. Till Asolo should be ready to receive her, she was lodged in that palace on the Grand Canal, now the Monte di Pietà, called the Palazzo Corner della Regina after her.

The castle of Asolo stood on the spurs of the Alps, between Bassano and Montebelluno, at no great distance from the Villa Masèr. Far away it looked across the plain to Padua and the Euganean Hills, those islanded mounds that rise abruptly from the rich growth of vineyards and of mulberry groves. On the other side of those hills lived another famous woman, beautiful, with golden hair—Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara. The morning sun and clear, light morning air come fresh to Asolo from the sea that lies round Venice; while behind it the Julian Alps swell upward, wave on wave, towards the boundary heights. It was here that Caterina was to taste the sweet idyllic close to all her stormy life, surrounded by her little court, her twelve maids-of-honour, and

<sup>1</sup> Marin Sanudo, *Chron.*, extract by Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Commemoriali*, lib. xvi. ap. Mas Latrie, *loc. cit.* p. 435; Mutinelli, *Annali Urbani*, lib. v.

her eighty serving-men, her favourite negress with the parrots, her apes and peacocks and hounds, and dwarf buffoon. Here the still days went by in garden walks, or by the little brooks, or in the oak grove, where the company would talk of love as though it had no life, like some dead god that could not reach their hearts ; or else would sing the sun to his setting with touch of lute-strings and sweetly modulated voices. A dreamy, gentle company in a soft, rich land, where the seasons melted from glory to glory, from pure green spring, through summer, "all delights," to russet autumn and its falling leaves, where "dead-cold winter" was as brief as might be.

Caterina left Venice for Asolo on October 11, 1489, and all the people of her little principality, olive crowned and bearing olive branches in their hands, came out to meet their lady. Under a canopy of cloth of gold they led her to the piazza of Borgo d'Asolo, where an address was presented to her. "Oh, happy land of Asolo," cries the orator in peroration—"oh, happy land of Asolo, and oh, most happy flock that now hast found so just and sweet a shepherdess! Oh, ship thrice fortunate whose tiller lies in such a skilful hand. Ye then, ye laurel boughs, the victor's meed, endure the sharp tooth of our knife that carves on you the name of Caterina. Sing, birds, unwonted strains to grace the name, the glorious name, Cornelia." And so he goes on, appealing to poets, to historians, even to the very rocks, to eternize the splendour of her story ; apostrophizing Apelles and Zeuxis, Zephyr and Jove, and the Delian goddess.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the unintended irony, it was all like some May masque designed by Poliziano or Lorenzo de' Medici, and executed by Piero da Cosimo, with its sham classicism, its false old gods, and its real sweet leaves and spring-tide air.

Caterina began to give laws to her little kingdom,

<sup>1</sup> Tentori, *Saggio d. St. Civil. e Polit. d. Venezia* (Venezia : 1790), vol. xii.



and to take a queenly interest in its cares and its well-being. She opened a *monte di pietà*, or pawnbroking bank, for the relief of those in pressing need. She imported grain from Cyprus and distributed it. She appointed her treasurer of state, her *potestas regia*, and an auditor to hear and judge appeals.<sup>1</sup> She wielded her little sceptre for her people's good, and won their love by her gentleness and grace. Here, in the quiet of twenty years, she lived, surrounded by a phantom royalty ; yet, unsubstantial as it might be, it was as real as any she had known in Cyprus. Here she and her court listened one and all to those grave *ragionamenti* on platonic love, with their weariful, never-ending age of gold ; with their gods and goddesses and mortals made immortal ; with Ceres, Venus, Cupid, Mars, and Jove ; with Ganymede, or Daphnis, or a Danaë.

Let us look at one day of her life that has been preserved to us. The speaker is Pietro Bembo, brilliant, handsome, twenty-eight years old. He has come across the Euganean Hills from Ferrara and Lucrezia's court, perhaps with that famous lock of her yellow hair already closed in the leaves of some book he carries. The month is September ; and the occasion the marriage of one among Caterina's maids to Floriano di Floriano da Montagnana. There are many guests from the country round, and from Venice too, all of them glad to escape to the cool mountain slopes from the torrid summer heat upon the plain. They have been breakfasting about twelve o'clock in the large central hall with *loggias* on either side, open to the air, but sheltered from the sun that is growing hotter and hotter to its meridian blaze. The faint breeze reaches them through the arches of the *loggia*, curling round the wide-spanned pillars. Between each of these are framed the tall-topped cypress spires

<sup>1</sup> Colbertaldi, *Vita di Caterina*. From this author and from Bembo's dialogues, *Degli Asolani*, I have taken the details of this part of Caterina's life.

that shoot up from the gardens below, relieved in black against the deep and throbbing blue. In the woods and alleys and under the pergolas is no hush ; all the pleasaunce lies quiet and silenced in the noon-day heat. The meal is over, but the company is still at table, Caterina sitting at one end, while the talk flows languidly around. The musicians have played and the singers sung. At a sign from the queen, two of her maids rise up, and, moving down the hall between the rows of guests, they curtsy low to Caterina. Then the elder, like one of Gian Bellini's or Carpaccio's "Angiolini," raises her lute and with one hand holds it to her breast, while with the other she sounds some few notes of prelude, and then breaks into song :

A maid I lived, in mirth and jocund air ;  
 Sweet fancies fed me, with my lot content.  
 Now Love doth me afflict, doth so torment,  
 Nor now nor ever will his torments spare.  
 I thought, ah me ! to live a life of joy  
 When first, dear Love, I passed into thy train ;  
 But now for dolorous death I wait, am fain ;  
 My trusting heart how could'st thou thus decoy ?  
 While yet to love unyielded and estranged,  
 Medea looked on Colchis free and glad ;  
 But when she burned for Jason, bitter and sad  
 Was all her life henceforth, to her last hour unchanged.

She, when she had finished her chaunt, played yet a little longer, returning upon the first notes of her song : then the younger took up her companion's refrain, but in an altered fashion, and, weaving around it with her lips and voice, made answer in this wise :

A maid I lived, in dolour and distress,  
 With comrades wroth, with my own self in rage ;  
 Now Love with such sweet thoughts doth me assuage,  
 What can I else but sing for mirthfulness ?  
 I would have sworn, O Love, to follow thee  
 Were but to make sure shipwreck on a rock ;  
 Yet, while I feared this doom, heart-riving shock,  
 Release from all my pains is granted me.

Until that day when first Love conqueror plays,  
Andromeda knows naught but sore annoy ;  
When she to Perseus bows, delight and joy  
Companion her through life, through death eternal praise.

So they go on with "nay" and "yea"; the "oh, diviner air" is caught up and answered by the "oh, diviner light." And when the girls have finished their antiphony the queen calls on her favourite maid to take her viol and sing to them, a closing note to the "yes" and the "no" of the other two. Then Caterina rises from table, and she and her attendants retire to their rooms to rest and sleep through the burning hours till evening shall bring the time for supper, more music, and dancing carried to the dawn. But three young Venetian gentlemen and three Venetian ladies prefer to leave sleep behind the curtains of their beds and wander out into the deep, inviting garden shade. The gardens were the pride of Asolo; and these six people, who are presently to lose themselves in the labyrinth of Bembo's dialogue, stroll now beneath a pergola of vines that divided the garden cross-wise. The shade from the woven leaves was delicious and cool; on either side of the walk ran a square-cut hedge of juniper, breast-high only, so that the eye might take in all the greenery of the close. There were other walks bounded by well-trimmed laurel walls, rising high up, and at their summits curling slightly over, so as to throw a shadow on the path beneath. Into this garden they strolled—the young men in close-fitting hose of bright and many-coloured silks, and short black cloaks; the ladies in velvet and brocades of gorgeous dyes and tight-rolled masses of golden hair: a globe of colour moving through a deep green shade. They wandered on, rising slowly uphill, for the gardens lay behind the house and towards the Alps, until they came to a lawn of fine and velvety grass, studded with flowers, where the more formal garden lost itself. Beyond the lawn



was a shrubbery of laurel growing as it chose; through this thicket a pathway led into a grove where the silence and the shade alike were profound. In the middle of this wood a clear stream bubbled from the living rock, welling up and filling a basin hollowed for it in the stone. Over the lips of the basin it fell, and was caught in a runnel of marble and led, with soft murmur and bickerings through light and shade, down to the gardens which it watered and kept cool. Here by this fountain the three ladies and their cavaliers sat down, and, after some slight coyness not quite real, spun out that cobweb of platonic love through the long declining afternoon.<sup>1</sup> The whole picture recalls the very spirit of Boccaccio's<sup>2</sup> introductions, of Poliziano's *ballate*, of Giorgione and his garden parties; it is a "never-ending Decameron."

For Caterina and her maids we may hope, however, that it was not all pure platonism. For her court was full of guests constantly arriving and departing; and every fifteenth day came Pandolfo Malatesta, lord of Rimini, from his castle of Cittadella, to make his suit to Caterina herself, or, as others said, to win the love of her waiting-maid Fiammetta. And her own family, the Cornaro, were courting Caterina for her influence. On the strength of their sister's royalty they aspired to the title of princes; and by them she found herself forced to arrange a match between one of her nieces and a prince of the house of Naples.<sup>3</sup> But Venice watched this ambition with a jealous eye. She held that the Cornaro were sufficiently rewarded by the knighthood of Giorgio and by the cardinal's hat which had been

<sup>1</sup> See Bembo, *Degli Asolani*, lib. i. op. class. Ital. No. 135 (Milano: 1808).

<sup>2</sup> See Boccaccio, Sonnet x. p. 376 of Sig. Carducci's edition; *Rime di Cino d. Pistoia ed altri del secolo xiv.*, Barbera (Firenze: 1862).

<sup>3</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 612.

procured for his son. Venice would not permit a private family to assume exceptional rank, and administered many sharp rebukes to Caterina, warning her to live content with that state of life to which it had pleased the Republic to call her, and to cease all thought of Cyprus, round which her fancy and her hopes still lingered.<sup>1</sup>

The queen really loved Asolo, her gardens, and her court, nor ever wished to leave them, summer or winter. Three times only did she make a journey from her castle. Once when the weather was so cold that men could walk from Mestre to Venice across the lagoon, the rigour of winter compelled her to return to her palace on the Grand Canal. Once too, in 1497, she paid a visit to her brother Giorgio, then *podestà* in Brescia.<sup>2</sup> She was splendidly and regally received. A guard of forty youths met her outside the town; on the close-fitting hose of each were blazoned the arms of Cornaro and Lusignan. Triumphs and allegorical pageants followed: Diana and her nymphs, who meet a winged Cupid who sings to them; but the nymphs all stay their ears, and, falling on the boy, tear his wings from his shoulders, as they do in Signorelli's picture in the National Gallery. The queen entered the city in a chariot of state drawn by four white horses horned like unicorns. Jousts by torchlight were given in the evening, and the jousts marched in procession, with helmets on their heads from whose crests burst flame. It was Caterina's last royal ceremony, and it was continued for twelve days; then the queen returned to Asolo. But Venice showed herself jealous of this play at mimic royalty, and for the honour then done to his sister Giorgio was soon after recalled from Brescia.

The troubled condition of the mainland which resulted from the wars of the League of Cambray

<sup>1</sup> Roman. *loc cit.* p. 437, note 1, cap. x. April 3, 1510.

<sup>2</sup> Marin Sanudo, *Diarii*, i. 741.

drove the queen from her home ; Asolo was occupied by the troops of Maximilian.<sup>1</sup> Caterina went to Venice for greater safety, and died there on July 10, 1510, fifty-six years old.<sup>2</sup> Her funeral displayed as much magnificence as Venice, on the verge of ruin, could afford. On the 11th of the month a bridge of boats was made across the Grand Canal from the Cornaro Palace to the other side. The dead queen was followed by the patriarch, the Signory, the vice-doge, the Archbishop of Spalato, and an immense crowd of citizens with torches in their hands. There was something fitting in the manner of her burial, for the night was a stormy one, with heavy wind and rain. On her coffin lay the crown of Cyprus—outwardly, at least, Venice insisted that her daughter was a queen ; but inside her body lay shrouded in the habit of St. Francis, with cord and cowl and coarse brown cloak. Caterina was carried to the Cornaro chapel in the Church of the Santi Apostoli, and next day the funeral service was performed. Over her grave Andrea Navagero, poet, scholar, and ambassador, made the oration that bade farewell to this unhappy queen, whose beauty, goodness, gentleness, and grace were unavailing to save her from the tyrannous cruelties of fate.

<sup>1</sup> The queen's property was confiscated by the Imperial Commander Leonardo Trissino on June 10, 1509. Paladini, *Asolo* (Asolo : 1892), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Bembo, *Historia Veneta* (Basileæ : 1556), lib. x. p. 417.



## The Constitution of the Venetian Republic and the State Archives<sup>1</sup>

AMONG the archives of Europe few, if any, are superior, in historical value and richness of detail, to the archives of the Venetian Republic preserved now in the monastery of the Frari at Venice. The importance of these archives is due to three causes: the position of the Republic in the history of Europe, the fulness of the archives themselves, and the remarkable preservation and order which distinguish them, in spite of the many dangers and vicissitudes through which they have passed.

Venice enjoyed a position unique among the states of Europe, for two reasons. Until the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, she was the mart of Europe in all commercial dealings with the East—a position secured to her by her geographical position and her supremacy in the Levant; and, in the second place, the Republic was the bulwark of Europe against the Turk. These are the two dominant features of Venice in general history; and under both

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the following among many other works on the archives and the constitution: Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise* (Paris: 1870) and *Souvenirs d'une Mission* (Paris: 1857); *Il regio Archivio Generale di Venezia* (Venice: 1875); *The Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vol. i.; Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's Report on the Archives; Giannotti, *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani* (Firenze: 1850); St. Disdier, *La Ville et République de Venise* (Paris: 1680); Amelot de la Houssaye, *Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise* (Paris: 1667); Gasparo Contarini, *De Republica Venetorum* (Lugd. Batavorum: 1628); Sandi, *Principi di Storia Civile della Repubblica di Venezia* (Venezia: 1755); Orlandini, *Storia della Magistrature Venete* (Saggio, Venezia: 1898).

aspects she came into perpetual contact with every European power. The universal importance of her position is faithfully reflected in the diplomatic documents contained in her archives. The Republic maintained ambassadors and residents at every court. These men were among the most subtle and accomplished diplomatists of their time, and the government they served was exacting and critical to the highest degree. The result is that the despatches, newsletters, and reports of the Venetian diplomatic agents form a varied, brilliant, and singular gallery of portraits, both of persons and of peoples. There is hardly a nation in Europe that will not find its history illustrated by the papers which belong to the Venetian Department for Foreign Affairs.

Nor are the papers which relate to the home government of the Republic less copious and valuable. The governmental machinery of Venice embraced upwards of a hundred different offices exercising separate jurisdictions, which, however, frequently appear to infringe on each other, so that in this lapse of time it becomes difficult to determine the precise province of each. This multiplicity of offices was partly due to the organic evolution of the state. As Venetian commerce and arms extended, new machinery was created for their regulation. But there was a further profound political reason which induced the Venetians to adopt this complex machinery of government. The great number of state offices made it possible to give to the large majority of the governing class a direct and responsible share in the life and organism of the state, and thus helped to bind the patrician caste into one living and organic whole. Each magistracy had its own series of documents, the daily record of its proceedings: in these we find the whole of that elaborate machinery of state laid bare before us in all its intricacy of detail; and we are enabled to study the construction, the origin, development, and ossification, of one of the most rigid and enduring constitutions that the

world has ever seen ; a constitution so strong in its component parts, so compact in its rib-work, that it sufficed to preserve a semblance of life in the body of the Republic long after the heart and brain had ceased to beat.

Admirable as are the preservation and order of these masses of state papers, it is not to be expected that each series, each magisterial archive, should be complete. There are many broad lacunæ, especially in the earlier period, which must ever be a cause for regret : for Venice growing is a more attractive and profitable subject than Venice dying. During the nine hundred and eighty-seven years that the government of the Republic held its seat in Venice, the state papers passed through many dangers from fire, revolution, neglect, or carelessness. When we recall the fires of 1230, 1479, 1574, and 1577, it is rather matter for congratulation that so much has escaped, than for surprise that so much has been destroyed. The losses would, undoubtedly, have been much more severe had all the papers and documents been preserved in one place, as they are now. But the Venetians stored the archives of the various magistracies either at the offices of those magistrates, or in some public building especially set apart for the purpose. The secret chancellery, which was always an object of great solicitude, containing as it did all the more private papers of the state, was deposited in a room on the second floor of the ducal palace. Many of the criminal records belonging to the Council of Ten were stored in the Piombi under the roof of the palace ; and the famous adventurer Casanova relates how he beguiled some of his prison hours by reading the trial of a Venetian nobleman, which he found among other papers piled at the end of the corridor where he was allowed to take exercise. Soon after the fall of the Republic, the following disposition of the papers was made. The political papers were stored at the Scuola di S. Teodoro ; the judicial, at the convent of S.



Giovanni Laterano; the financial, at S. Provolo. In the year 1815 the Austrian government resolved to collect and arrange all state papers in one place. The building chosen was the convent of the Frari; and the work was entrusted to Jacopo Chiodo, the first director of the archives. The scheme suggested by Chiodo has served as a basis for the arrangement that has been already carried out, or is still in hand.

Under the Republic it was natural that access to important diplomatic papers and to secrets of state should be granted with reserve, and only to persons especially authorized to make research. The directors appointed by the Austrian government showed a disposition to maintain that precedent; and M. Baschet relates that it was only by a personal appeal to the emperor that he obtained access to the archives of the Ten. The Italian government allow nearly absolute liberty of search, a tax being imposed for the examination and copying of notarial documents which are to be produced before the Law Courts.

Any attempt to explain the archives of Venice and to display their contents must be preceded by a statement of the main features of the constitution of the Republic upon which the order and the arrangement of the archives are based. The constitution of Venice has frequently been likened to a pyramid, with the Great Council for its base and the doge for apex. The figure is more or less correct; but it is a pyramid that has been broken at its edges by time and by necessity. The political body was originally constructed in four groups, or tiers—if we are to preserve the pyramidal simile—one rising above the other. These four tiers were the *Maggior Consiglio* or Great Council, the Lower House; the *Pregadi* or Senate, the Upper House; the *Collegio*, or the Cabinet; and the doge. The famous Council of Ten and its equally famous commission, the three inquisitors of state, did not enter into the original scheme; they are an appendix to the state, an intrusion, a break in the

symmetry of the pyramid. Later on we shall explain their construction and relation to the main body of government. For the present we leave them aside, and confine our attention to the four departments of the Venetian constitution above mentioned.

The Great Council did not assume its permanent form and place in the Venetian constitution till the year 1296. At that date the famous act, known as the closing of the Great Council, was passed. By that act, which was only the final step in a revolution that had been for long in process, those citizens who were excluded from the Great Council remained for ever outside the constitution; all functions of government were concentrated in the hands of those nobles who were included in the council; the constitution of the Republic was stereotyped as a rigid oligarchy. Previous to the year 1296, a great council had existed, created first in the reign of Pietro Ziani (1172); but this council was really democratic in character, not oligarchic; it was elected each September, and its members were chosen from the whole body of the citizens. Earlier still than the reign of Ziani, the population used to meet tumultuously and express their opinion upon matters of public interest, such as the election of a doge or a declaration of war, first in the *Concione* under their tribunes, while Venetia was still a confederation of lagoon-islands; and then in the *Arengo* under their doge, when the confederation was centralized at Rialto. But of these assemblies the latter was disorderly and irregular, and the former was of doubtful authority. It is from the closing of the Great Council that we must date the positive establishment of the Venetian oligarchy, and the completion of that constitution which endured for five hundred years, from 1296 till the fall of the Republic in 1797.

The age at which the young nobles might take their seats in the council—that is to say, might enter upon public life—was fixed at twenty-five, except in the

cases of the Barbarelli, or thirty nobles between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, who were elected by ballot on the fourth of each December, St. Barbara's day; and in the case of those who, in return for money advanced to the state, obtained a special grace to take their seats before their twenty-fifth year.

The chief functions of the Great Council were the passing of laws and the election of magistrates. But in process of time the legislative duties of the council were almost entirely absorbed by the Senate; and the *Maggior Consiglio* only retained its distinguishing function, the election of almost every officer of state, from the doge downwards. The large number of these magistracies, and the various seasons of the year at which they fell vacant, engaged the Great Council in a perpetual series of elections. It is not our intention to explain in detail the elaborate process by which the Venetians carried out their political elections; such an explanation would carry us beyond our scope, which is to state the position and functions of each member in the constitution of the Republic. But, briefly, the process was this. The law required either two or four candidates for every vacant magistracy, and the election to that magistracy was said to take place *a due* or *a quattro mani*, respectively. If the office to be filled required *quattro mani*, the whole body of the Great Council balloted for four groups of nine members each, who were chosen by drawing a golden ball from among the silver ones in the balloting urn. Each of these groups retired to a separate room, and there each group nominated one candidate to go to the poll for the vacant office. The names of the four candidates were then presented to the council and balloted. The candidate who secured the largest number of votes, above the half of those present, was elected to the vacant office. Thus the election to a magistracy was a triple process; first, the election of the nominators, then the election of the candidates, and finally the election to the office.



The Great Council, as representing the whole Republic, possessed certain judicial functions, which were used on rare occasions only, when the state believed itself placed in grave danger through the fault of its commanders. The famous case of Vettor Pisani, after his defeat at Pola, in 1379, and the case of Antonio Grimani, in the year 1499, were both sent to the Great Council, who passed sentence on those generals. But, broadly speaking, the judicial functions of the *Maggior Consiglio* hardly existed, its legislative functions dwindled away and were absorbed by the Senate, and its chief duty and prerogative lay in the election to almost every state official.

Coming now to the second tier in the pyramid of the constitution, the Senate, or *Pregadi*—the invited—we find that the Senate proper was composed of sixty members, elected in the Great Council, six at a time. The elections took place once a week, and were so arranged that they should be complete by the first of October in each year. In addition to the Senate proper, another body of sixty, called the *Zonta*, or addition, was elected by the outgoing Senate at the close of its year of office; but it was necessary that the names of the *Zonta* should be approved by the Great Council before their election was valid. The Senate and the *Zonta* together formed one hundred and twenty members; and besides these, the doge, his six councillors, the Council of Ten, the supreme court of appeal, and many special magistrates, who presided over departments of finance, customs, and justice, belonged *ex officio* to the Senate, and brought the number of votes up to two hundred and forty-six. Further, fifty-one magistrates of minor departments also sat, with the right to debate, but without the right to vote.

The Senate was the real core of the administration. The presence, *ex officio*, of so many and such various officers of state sufficiently indicates the wide field which was covered by the authority of the *Pregadi*.

The large number of the senatorial body, and the diversity of subjects with which it dealt, required that business should be carried on with parsimony of time and precision of method; and therefore private members were restricted to the right of debate. Only the dogè, his councillors, the *savii grandi*, and the *savii di terra ferma* had the right to move the Senate; and their propositions related to peace, war, foreign affairs, instructions to ambassadors and representatives of foreign courts, to commercial treaties, finance, and home legislation. The various measures were spoken to by their proposers, and by the magistrates whose offices they affected. As in the case of the Great Council, the Senate also on rare occasions exercised judicial functions. It was in the discretion of the College to send a faulty commander for trial either to the Great Council or to the Senate; but in that case the charge must be one of negligence or misjudgment; if the charge implied treason, it was taken before the Council of Ten. A few of the higher officers of state were elected in the Senate, among them the *savii grandi* and the *savii di terra ferma*, and the admiral of the fleet. The functions of the Senate were legislative, judicial, and elective. But just as the Great Council was pre-eminently the elective body, so the Senate was pre-eminently the legislative body in the constitution of Venice.

The Collegio, or Cabinet of Ministers, formed the third tier in the pyramid. The College was composed of the following members: the doge, his six councillors, and the three chiefs of the court of appeal; these ten persons formed the *collegio minore*, or *serenissima signoria*; in addition to these there were the six *savii grandi*, the five *savii di terra ferma*, and the five *savii da mar*—a body of twenty-six persons in all, forming the College. Beginning with the lowest in rank, the *savii agli ordini*, or *da mar*, were, as their name implies, a Board of Admiralty; but they acted in that capacity under the orders of the *savii grandi*,

upon whom the naval affairs of the Republic immediately depended. The *savii agli ordini* had a vote but no voice in the College; this post was given, for the most part, to young and promising politicians; it was a training-school for statesmen: "*Officio loro*," says Giannotti, "*è tacere ed ascoltare*." The office lasted for six months only; and so there was a constant stream of young men passing through the political school, and becoming intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Republic and the methods of government. How excellent that school must have been will become apparent as we proceed to note the functions of the College, of which the *savii agli ordini* formed a silent part.

Next in order above the *savii agli ordini* came the *savii di terra ferma*. This board was composed of five members: the *savio alla scrittura*, or minister for war; the *savio cassier*, or chancellor of the exchequer; the *savio alle ordinanze*, or minister for the native militia in the cities or the mainland; the *savio ai da mò*, or minister for the execution of all measures voted urgent; the *savio ai ceremoniali*, or minister for ceremonies of state. These *savii di terra ferma*, like the *savii agli ordini*, held office for six months only.

The six *savii grandi*, who came above the *savii di terra ferma*, superintended the actions of the two boards below them, and, if necessary, issued orders which would override those of the other ministers. They were, in fact, the responsible directors of the state. The *savii grandi* were required to prepare all business to be laid before the College, where it was first discussed and arranged before being submitted to the Senate for approval. To facilitate this labour of preparation, each of the *savii grandi* took a week in turn, and the *savio* of the week was, in fact, prime minister of Venice. It was he who read despatches, granted audiences to ambassadors, and prepared official replies. The doge presided in the College, it is true; but it was the *savio* of the week who opened



the business, and suggested the various measures to be adopted.

Besides these boards of *savii*, the College included the ducal councillors and the three chiefs of the court of appeal. We shall speak of these latter when we come to the judicial department of the constitution. The office of ducal councillor was, perhaps, the most venerable in Venice. These six men held, as it were, the ducal honours and functions in commission; they embodied the authority of the doge to such an extent, that without their presence he could not act; he became a nonentity unless supported by four at least of his council; while, on the other hand, the absence of the doge in no way diminished the authority of the ducal councillors. For example, the doge without his council could not preside, neither in the *Maggior Consiglio*, nor in the Senate, nor in the College; but four ducal councillors had the power to preside without the doge. The doge might not open despatches except in the presence of his council, but his council might open despatches in the absence of the doge. Yet, great as were the external honours of the ducal councillors, the office was rather ornamental than important. It was the *savii grandi* who were the directing spirit through all the multitudinous affairs of the College.

As we have seen, those affairs embraced the whole field of government, except the field of justice. The College had no judicial functions, nor did it legislate. As the *Maggior Consiglio* was the elective member, and the Senate the legislative, so the College was the initiative and executive member in the state. The College proposed measures which became law in the Senate; and the execution of those laws was entrusted to the College, which had the machinery of state at its disposal. It is this right of initiating which distinguishes the College; and it is just upon this point that the ducal councillors appear to have a slight pre-eminence; for the doge, his council, and the *savii*

alone had the right to initiate in the Senate; the doge, his council, and the chiefs of the Ten alone had the right to initiate in the Council of Ten; the doge and his council alone had the right to initiate in the Maggior Consiglio. The doge and his council alone move through all departments of government, presiding and initiating, and embodying the spirit of the Republic; and yet in no case is their power great; for the savii had more influence in the Senate, the chiefs of the Ten in the Council of Ten; and the Great Council, where the doge and his councillors had the field to themselves, was of little importance in the direction of affairs.

At the apex of the constitutional pyramid we find the doge.<sup>1</sup> The doge also had his distinctive functions in the state; his duties were ornamental rather than administrative. Though all the acts of the government were executed in his name, laws passed, despatches sent, treaties made, and war declared, yet it is not in these departments that the doge stands pre-eminent; it is throughout the pomp and display of the Republic that he is supreme; and the archive wherein his glory shows most brightly is the *Ceremoniali*.

The doge was elected for life. When a doge died, the eldest ducal councillor filled the office of vice-doge until the election of the new prince. A waxen image of the deceased doge was laid out in the chamber of the Piovego, on the first floor of the ducal palace, dressed in robes of state, the mantle of cloth of gold, and the ducal biretta. Twenty Venetian noblemen were appointed to attend in the *chapelle ardente*. On the third day the funeral ceremonies took place; and the Great Council on the same day elected the officers who were to revise the coronation oath, and to render its provisions more stringent if the conduct of the deceased had revealed any point where a future doge could exercise even the smallest independence in constitutional matters. At the same time the Council

<sup>1</sup> See Checchetti, *Il Doge di Venezia* (Venezia: 1864).

elected another body of officers, who were required to examine the conduct of the late doge, and, if he had violated his coronation oath, his heirs paid the penalty by a fine. Immediately after the appointment of these officers, the *Maggior Consiglio* proceeded to create the forty-one electors to the dukedom. The process of election was long and intricate, and occupied five days at the least; for there was a quintuple series of ballots and votings to be concluded before the forty-one were finally chosen. When the forty-one noblemen had been appointed, they were taken to a chamber specially prepared for them, where, as in the case of a papal election, they were obliged to stay until they had determined upon the new doge. They were bound by oath never to reveal what took place inside this election chamber. But that oath was not always observed in the spirit; and memoranda of certain proceedings of the forty-one are still preserved in the private archives of the Marcello family. The first step was to elect three priors, or presidents, and two secretaries. The presidents took their seats at a table, on which stood a ballot-box and an urn. The secretaries gave to every elector a slip of paper, upon which each one wrote the name of the man whom he proposed as doge. The forty-one slips of paper were then placed in the urn, and one was drawn out at hazard. If the noble whose name was written upon the slip chanced to be an elector, he was required to withdraw. Then each of the electors was at liberty to attack the candidate, to point out defects and recall misdeeds.<sup>1</sup> These hostile criticisms, which covered the whole of a candidate's private life, his physical qualities, and his public conduct, were written down by the secretaries, and the candidate was recalled. The objections urged against him were read over to the aspirant, without the names of the urgers appearing, and he was invited to defend himself. Attack and defence continued till no further criticisms

<sup>1</sup> See the Marcello MS.



were offered, and then the name of the candidate was balloted before the priors. If it received twenty-five favourable votes, its owner was declared doge; if less than twenty-five, a fresh name was drawn from the urn, and the whole process was repeated until some candidate secured the necessary five-and-twenty votes. As soon as this issue was reached, the Signoria was informed of the result, and the new doge, attended by the electors, descended to St. Mark's, where, from the pulpit on the left side of the choir, the prince was shown to the people, and where, before the high altar, he took the coronation oath and received the standard of St. Mark. The great doors of the Basilica were then thrown open, and the doge was carried in procession round the piazza, scattering coin from the *pozzetto*, or kind of portable pulpit in which he was borne on the shoulders of the arsenal hands, and returned to the Porta della Carta. At the top of the Giants' Stair the eldest ducal councillor placed the biretta on his head, and he was brought to the Sala del Piovego, where the late doge had lain in state, and where he too would one day come—a fact that was impressed upon the dogaressa too, if there were one, in language quite brutal in its frankness: "Your Serenity," thus spoke the ducal councillor, "has come here in the pride of life to take possession of the Palace; but I warn you that when dead your brains, eyes, and bowels will be removed. You will be brought here to this very spot, and here you will lie for three days before they bury you."<sup>1</sup> Then the doge retired to his private apartment, and the ceremony of election closed.

As we have already observed, the position of the prince in the Republic of Venice was almost purely ornamental. The doge presided, either in person or by commission through his councillors, at every council of state; he presided, however, not as a guiding and deliberating chief, but as a symbol of the

<sup>1</sup> See Molmenti, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 569.

majesty of Venice. He is there not as an individual, a personality, but as the outward and visible sign of an idea, the idea of the Venetian oligarchy. The history of the personal authority of the doge falls into three periods. A period of great vigour and almost despotic power dates from the foundation of the dukedom, in the year 697, down to the reign of Pietro Ziani in 1172. During this first period the ducal authority showed a tendency to become concentrated and almost hereditary in the hands of one or two leading families. For example, we have seven doges of the Particiaco house, five doges of the Candiani, and three of the Orseoli. But the rivalry and balanced power of these great families eventually exhausted one another, and preserved the dukedom of Venice from ever becoming a kingdom. A second period extends from the year 1172 down to 1457, and is marked by the emergence of the great commercial houses, and the development of the oligarchy upon the basis of a Great Council. The aristocracy during this period were engaged in excluding the people from any share in the government, and in curbing and finally crushing the authority of the doge. The steps in this process are indicated by the closing of the Great Council, the revolution of Tiepolo, the trials of Marino Falier, Lorenzo Celsi, and the Foscari. The third period covers what remains of the Republic, from 1457 down to 1797. During this period the doge was little other than the figure-head of the Republic; the point of least weight and greatest splendour; the brilliant apex to the pyramid of the Venetian constitution.

So far, then, we have examined the four tiers in the original structure of the constitution, the doge, the College, the Senate, and the Great Council; and we have seen that, broadly speaking, these were, respectively, ornamental, initiative and executive, legislative and elective. But this pyramid of the constitution was not perfectly symmetrical; its edges were broken. This interruption of outline was caused by the Council

of Ten. The exact position in the Venetian constitution occupied by this famous council, and its relation to the other members of the government, have proved a constant source of difficulty and error to students of Venetian history. Leaving aside the question whether we can find traces of a Council of Ten earlier than the conspiracy of Tiepolo, it is still possible for us to indicate the constitutional necessity which called that council into existence. As we have pointed out, the College could not act on its own responsibility without the Senate; the Senate could not initiate without the College, for the preparation of all affairs passed through the hands of the College. To establish connection between these two branches of the administration was a process that required some time; it could not be done swiftly and secretly. In all crises of political importance, whether home or foreign, some instrument, more expeditious than the Senate, was required to sanction the propositions of the College. That instrument, acting swiftly and secretly, with a speed and secrecy impossible in so large a body as the Senate, was created with the Council of Ten. The Ten were an extraordinary magistracy, devised to meet unexpected pressure upon the ordinary machine of government. The history of the emergence of the Ten proves this view. Without determining whether the council existed previous to the year 1310, we may take that year as the date of its first appearance as a potent element in the state. The rebellion of Tiepolo and Querini, an aristocratic revolt against the growing power of the new commercial nobility, paralyzed the ordinary machinery of state, and revealed the danger inherent in a large and slow-moving body of rulers. The Ten were called to power by the Venetians, just as the Romans created the dictatorship, in order to save the state in a dangerous crisis.

The place of the Ten in the constitutional structure is below the College and parallel with the Senate.



Below the College the administration bifurcates ; the ordinary course of business flows through the Senate, the extraordinary through the Ten. The Ten possessed an authority equal to that of the Senate ; the choice of which instrument should be used rested with the College. The Ten appeared to be of more importance than the Senate, solely because they were used upon more critical and dramatic occasions. Wherever the machinery of the College and Senate moves too slowly, we find the swifter machinery of the College and the Ten in motion. And so not only in political affairs, home and foreign, but also in affairs financial and judicial, the Council of Ten takes its part. The Ten, as being the readier instrument to the hands of the College, gradually absorbed more and more of the functions which originally belonged to the Senate. This process of absorption, and the extension of the province of the Ten, is marked by the establishment of its sub-commissions, which took their place in every department side by side with the delegations of the Senate and the ordinary magistrates. In politics and foreign affairs there is the famous office of the three inquisitors of state. In the region of justice all cases of treason and coining, and certain cases of outrage on public morals, came before the Ten ; and it was always open to the College to remove a case from the ordinary courts to the Ten, when state reasons rendered it expedient to do so. In the police department the *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia*, and in finance the *Camerlenghi*, were officers of that council. In the war office the artillery was under their control ; and in the arsenal certain galleys, marked c.x., were always at their disposal.

These five great members of the state, four regular and one irregular, formed the political and legislative departments of the Venetian government. It remains now to give a brief account of the judicial machinery of the Republic before proceeding to examine the papers which belong to these various departments.

In the administration of justice all cases, criminal as well as civil, were broadly divided into cases arising in the city itself, *di dentro*, and cases arising on the mainland or elsewhere throughout the Dominion, known as cases *di fuori*. In Dalmatia, the Levant, and on the mainland, justice was administered, in the first instance, by officers who bore most frequently the title of rector. In Venice cases were tried, in the first instance, before various special courts, each having jurisdiction in certain cases only. Among these courts we may mention the police courts of the signori di notte and the cinque alla pace; the court of the Piovego, which decided cases of contract; the sanitary court, the Jews' court, the Strangers' court. From all these courts of first instance, in the Dominion as well as in Venice, there was an appeal to the supreme courts. The courts of appeal were four in number: the quarantia criminale, the quarantia vecchia civile, the quarantia nuova civile, and the collegio delle biade. To begin with the lowest in authority, the collegio delle biade was a court composed of twenty-two judges, whose duty was to try civil cases on appeal, both *di dentro* and *di fuori*, in which the value at stake stood between fifty and three hundred ducats. The cases *di dentro* and the cases *di fuori* were heard by this court in alternate months. As the court was composed of twenty-two members, it might be equally divided; in that case the cause was sent up to the appeal courts above; to the quarantia vecchia, if it were an appeal *di dentro*; to the quarantia nuova, if it were an appeal *di fuori*.

The quarantia vecchia civile and the quarantia nuova civile were two courts, composed of forty judges each, whose duties were to try appeal cases where the stake stood above the value of three hundred ducats. Cases *di dentro* went before the old court, cases *di fuori* were heard in the new court. The forty judges of the quarantia nuova were elected in the Great Council; they were required to be above the age of thirty.

These forty judges served eight months in the *quarantia nuova*, and then moved on to the *quarantia vecchia*, where they served a second eight months; they then passed into the *quarantia criminale* for a third period of eight months. The Great Council elected a new *quarantia nuova* every eight months; and a nobleman's term of judicial service lasted for twenty-four months, in all; after which he was ineligible for re-election till eight months had elapsed. If the new court were equally divided on a case of appeal, the cause passed into the old court, and *vice versâ*; if the courts, upon this second hearing, were still equally divided, the case was sent up to the Senate, upon a motion made in the Great Council.

The *quarantia criminale* tried all criminal cases of appeal, both *di dentro* and *di fuori*; but whereas the two other *quarantie* were purely courts of appeal, the *quarantia criminale* had the power to cite criminal cases before it in the first instance. The criminal appeal court was the most ancient and honourable court in Venice; its three presidents sat *ex officio* in the Collegio, and were members of the Signoria, accompanying the doge whenever he presided at any council, and embodying and representing the spirit of Justice in the Venetian constitution. The three presidents of the criminal court held their seats in the Signoria for two months at a time, and were then succeeded by other three. During their absence from their own court their place was taken by three ducal councillors, called the *consiglieri da basso*, who represented the doge by the side of Justice, as the presidents represented Justice by the side of the doge.

Each of the three *quarantie* had three officials permanently attached to the court for the purpose of preparing and explaining the case to be submitted to the forty judges. The officers of the criminal court were called the *avvogadori di commun*; those of the old civil court were called *auditori vecchi*; those of the new civil court were called *auditori nuovi*. If a



suitor wished to appeal against the decision of a rector in a civil suit, he came to Venice and saw the auditori nuovi. They cited both parties before them, and heard the case exactly as it had been pleaded before the rector. If one or more of the auditori held that the appeal ought to lie, then, supposing the value in dispute to be below fifty ducats, the auditori themselves heard the case; but if the value was above fifty and under three hundred ducats, the case was sent to the collegio delle biade; if the value exceeded three hundred ducats, the case went before the quarantia nuova. The appellant caused the clerk of the court to enter his case on the list in pursuance of an order from the auditori; and the cases were taken in order of date, except cases between members of a family, or cases affecting a ward or perishable goods, and these had the precedence. The presidents were bound to yield the court to the appellant as soon as possible; and when the case had been called on, it might not occupy more than three days. The auditori who had allowed the appeal were bound to defend it before the court, and to show reason why they had permitted the court to be moved. No advocate might speak for more than an hour and a half measured by a sand-glass; but that hour and a half did not include the time occupied in reading papers. When the pleadings were closed, the court arrived at its judgment by vote. Three kinds of vote were possible: the vote *tagliare*, to quash the judgment of the court below; the vote *lodare*, to confirm that judgment; or the vote *non sinceri*, undecided. If the votes *tagliare* exceeded the votes *lodare* and *non sinceri* taken together, the case was sent down again to the original court. If the votes *lodare* exceeded the votes *tagliare* and *non sinceri*, the judgment of the court was confirmed. But if neither of these results was reached, the court heard the case again, minus the *non sinceri* voters. This same method of procedure was observed in the other quarantie; but if the quarantia criminale quashed a

judgment, the case was not sent down to the original court ; the *quarantia* itself passed the final sentence.

In many cases appeal, which implied a journey to Venice, was too expensive for the poor of the distant provinces. To meet this difficulty the *auditori nuovi* were obliged to go circuit every two years through the mainland towns, and three *sindici da mar* through the towns of Dalmatia, Greece, and the Levant, hearing appeals and citing them to Venice when necessary.

The arrangements for the pay of justice were both simple and efficient. The members of the criminal forty received two-thirds of a ducat, and the members of the other forties received one-third of a ducat each every time they sat. The *avvogadori*, who had charge of the criminal cases, were paid a fixed sum yearly out of fines and confiscations. In civil cases the plaintiff paid to the judge of first instance a certain amount per cent. on the value at issue. If he appealed, he paid the same amount again to the *auditori*. If he won his appeal, he recovered from the judge of first instance, who was therefore paid for sound judgments only ; if he lost his appeal, he recovered from the *auditori*, who were thus refused payment for sending a case before the court which the forty judges ignored ; and this regulation served to protect the court of appeal from abuse ; for frivolous appeals brought no pay to the *auditori*, and were sure to be disallowed by them at the outset.

One of the most remarkable features in the Venetian constitution is the infinite subdivision of government, and the number of offices to be filled. Nobles alone were eligible for the majority of these offices, and if we consider how small a body the Great Council really was, it is clear that the larger number of Venetian noblemen must have been employed in the service of the state at some time in their lives. The great political and administrative activity which reigned inside the comparatively small body that formed the ruling caste, as compared with the absolute stagnation

and quiet which marked the life of the ordinary citizen, is one of the most noteworthy points in the history of Venice. Every noble above the age of twenty-five was a member of the Maggior Consiglio ; every week that council was engaged in filling up some office of state, had some new candidate before it. The tenure of all offices, except the dukedom and the procuratorship of St. Mark, was so brief, rarely exceeding a year or sixteen months, that the fret and activity of elections must have been nearly incessant. This constant unrest bore its fruit in perpetual intrigues, and censors were appointed to check the rampant corruption and bribery. But the main point which is impressed upon us is the universality of political training to which all the nobles of Venice were subjected. No matter how frivolous a young patrician might be, he was obliged to sit in the Great Council ; he would be called upon to assist in electing the Ten, whose omniscience and severity he had every reason to dread ; he might even find himself named to fill some minor post. It was impossible, under these circumstances, that he should fail to be educated politically, or that he should ever lose the keenest interest in every movement of the state. It is to this political activity that we must look for one of the reasons which conduced to the extraordinary longevity of the Venetian constitution.

Each of the government offices, many as they were, possessed its own collection of papers. These are either still in loose sheets, just as they left the office ; or bound in volumes. They are indicated by the name of the government department, the subject dealt with, and the date. The papers are of three kinds ; first, there are the files or *filze*, the original minutes of the board, written down in actual council by the secretaries, and with the *filze* are the despatches or other documents upon which the council took measures. In many of the more important departments, such as the Senate, the Ten, or the College, these *filze*



were epitomized ; the substance of each day's business was written out in large volumes known as "Registri" ; each entry was signed by the secretary who had made the digest, and was accepted as authentic for all purposes of reference. These registers are, in many cases, of the greatest value where the files have been destroyed or lost. They were more constantly in use, and therefore more carefully preserved ; and now they frequently form our sole authority for certain periods. As a rule the registers are very full and good ; they contain all that is of importance in the files ; but in making research upon any point it is never safe to ignore the files where they exist. In some cases the secretaries made a further digest of the registers in volumes known as "Rubrics," which contain in brief the headings of all materials to be found in the registers. As the registers sometimes supply the place of lost files, so the rubrics are occasionally our only authority where registers and file are both missing. The rubrics are often of the highest value. As an instance, we may cite the twenty volumes of rubrics to the despatches from England between the years 1603 and 1748. The method of research, therefore, where all three kinds of documents exist is this : to examine first the rubrics, then the registers, and then the files. But the infinite subdivisions of the government offices in Venice render the task of research somewhat bewildering ; and a student cannot be certain that he has exhausted all the information on his subject until he has examined a large number of these minor offices. He will probably find some notice of the point he is examining in the papers of the Senate or of the Ten, and if it be a matter of home affairs, he can trace it thence through the various magistracies under whose cognizance it would come ; or if it be a matter of foreign policy, he will find further information in the papers of the College.

Under the Republic these collections of state papers were not known as archives, but as chancelleries. The

collections of highest interest, the papers to which the student is most likely to turn his attention, are those relating to the ceremony, to the home, and to the foreign policy of Venice. These three groups are contained in the ducal, the secret, and the inferior chancelleries. The three chancelleries were committed to the charge of the grand chancellor and his staff of secretaries, who received, arranged, and registered the official papers as they issued from the various councils of state. The grand chancellor was not a patrician; he was chosen from that upper class of commoners known as *cittadini originarii*, an inferior order of nobility, ranking below the governing caste, but bearing coat armour. The office of grand chancellor was of great dignity and antiquity, and was held for life. The chancellor was head and representative of the people, as the doge was head and representative of the patricians; and when the nobility began to exclude the people from all share in the government, the grand chancellor was allowed to be present at all sessions of the Great Council and of the Senate as the silent witness of the people, confirming the acts of the government, and bridging, though by the finest thread, the gulf that otherwise separated the governed from the governing. The part which the grand chancellor took in the business of the Maggior Consiglio and of the Senate was a constant and an active part. It was his duty to superintend the arrangements for every election, to direct the secretaries in attendance, to announce the names of the candidates for office, and to proclaim the successful competitor. His seat in the Great Council hall was on the left-hand of the doge's dais, and his secretaries sat below him.

But the custody of the state papers was by far the most important function which the grand chancellor had to perform. To assist him in these labours he was placed at the head of a large college of secretaries, trained in a school especially established to fit them for their duties. In the year 1443 a decree of the

Great Council required the doge and the Signoria to elect each year twelve lads to be taught Latin, rhetoric, and philosophy, and the number of the pupils was gradually increased. From this school they passed out by examination, and became first extraordinaries and ordinaries, called notaries ducal, then secretaries to the Senate, and finally secretaries to the Ten. The post of secretary was one which required much diligence and discretion. The secretaries were in constant attendance on the various councils of state, and thus became intimately acquainted with all the secret affairs of the Republic. They were frequently sent on delicate missions. It was a secretary of the Ten who brought Carmagnola to Venice to stand his trial; and, as we shall presently relate, it was a secretary of the Senate who announced to Thomas Killigrew, the English minister, his dismissal from Venice. The secretaries were sometimes accredited as residents to foreign courts, though they were not eligible for the post of ambassador. Inside the chancellery the secretaries were entirely at the disposal of the grand chancellor, and their duties were to study, to invent, and to read cipher; to transcribe the registers and rubrics; to keep the annals of the Council of Ten; and to enter the laws in the statute book.

We may now turn our attention to the principal series of state papers which issued from the five great members of the constitution, the *Maggior Consiglio*, the Senate, the Ten, the College, and the doge, and show how these papers were arranged under the three chancelleries of which we have spoken.

The *cancelleria inferiore* was preserved in one large room near the head of the Giants' Staircase in the ducal palace, and was entrusted to the care of the notaries ducal, the lowest order of secretaries. The documents in this chancellery related chiefly to the doge, his rights, his official possessions, his restrictions, and his state. Among these papers, accordingly,



we find the coronation oaths, the reports of the commissioners appointed to examine those oaths, and the reports of the commissioners appointed to review the life of each doge deceased. This series is valuable as revealing the steps by which the aristocracy slowly curtailed the personal authority of the doge, and bound his office about with iron fetters, and crushed his power. In addition to these papers the inferior chancellery contained the documents relating to the dignitaries of St. Mark's in its capacity as ducal chapel; the order and ceremony of the ducal household; the expenditure of the civil list; and the archives of the procurators of St. Mark, which contained the wills, trusts, and bequests of private citizens.

The ducal chancellery, which the Council of the Ten once called "*cor nostri status*," was preserved on the upper floor of the palace, and was reached by the Scala d'oro. The papers were arranged in a number of cupboards surmounted by the arms of the various grand chancellors who had presided in that office. The documents of the ducal chancellery are of far higher importance than those contained in the cancelleria inferiore; they consist of political papers which it was not necessary to keep secret. Among the many interesting series of documents which fell to the ducal chancellery, the most valuable are the "*compilazione della Leggi*," or statute-books distinguished by the various colours of their bindings—gold, roan, and green—to mark the statutes which relate to the *Maggior Consiglio*, the Senate, and the College respectively; the "*secretario alle voci*," or record of all elections in the Great Council; the "*libri gratiarum*," or special privileges. But most important of all is the great series of documents which include the whole legislation of the Senate relating to Venetian affairs on sea and land. Of this vast series, those marked "*Terra*" contain 3128 volumes of files, 411 volumes of registers, and 7 volumes of rubrics; those marked "*Mar*" number 1286 volumes of files, 247

volumes of registers, and 7 volumes of rubrics. It will easily be seen how important the ducal chancellery is, both for the verification of dates and also as displaying so large a tract of the Venetian home administration.

But important as the ducal chancellery undoubtedly is, it cannot vie in interest with the cancelleria secreta, which might, with every justice, have been called "*cor nostri status*," for it is in the papers of that chancellery that the long history of the growth, splendour, and decline of the Republic is to be traced in all its manifold details and complicated relations. The secret chancellery was established by a decree of the Great Council in the year 1402. Its object was to preserve those papers of highest state importance from the publicity to which the ducal chancellery was exposed. The regulation of the secret chancellery was undertaken by the Council of Ten, and the rigorous orders which they issued from time to time abundantly prove the difficulty they experienced in securing the secrecy which they desired. The secret chancellery became the depository of all state papers of great moment; and if we take the chief members of the constitution in order, and note the documents issuing from them which fell to the custody of the *secreta*, we shall see how the great flow of Venetian history is to be followed here rather than in any other department of the archives.

To begin with the Maggior Consiglio, we have the long series of registers containing the deliberations of the council from the year 1232 down to the fall of the Republic in 1797, occupying forty-two volumes, and distinguished, at first, by such capricious names as "*Capricornus*," "*Pilosus*," "*Presbiter*," and "*Fronesis*"; and later on by the names of the secretaries who prepared them, "*Ottobonus primus*," "*Ottobonus filius*," "*Busenellus*," and "*Vianolus*." In the special archive of the *Avvogadori di Commun*, a contemporary series of registers is to be found; it covers from 1232

to 1547, and should be consulted together with the first series, for it is more voluminous and minute. The first reference to England that occurs in the Venetian archives is in the volume "Fronesis" (1318-1385).

The Senate supplied a far larger number of papers to the secret chancellery than that yielded by the Great Council. This was to be expected, owing to the central position of the Senate in the constitution, and its prominent place in the management of Venetian policy, home and foreign. The oldest documents in the archives of Venice belong to the Senate. They are contained in the volumes of pacts or treaties, seven in number, without including the volume "Albus," which is devoted to treaties between the Republic and the Eastern Empire, or the volume "Blancus," which contains the treaties between Venice and the Emperors of the West. The thirty-three volumes of "Commemoriali" formed a sort of commonplace book for the use of statesmen; in them were registered briefly the most important events and abstracts of principal documents which passed through the hands of the government. The "Commemoriali" cover the years 1293 to 1797; but after the middle of the sixteenth century they were neglected, and they are chiefly valuable down to that date only. After the "Patti" and "Commemoriali" we begin the record of the regular proceedings in the Senate. This series contains papers relating to home government, foreign policy, the dominions of Venice on the mainland, in Dalmatia and the Levant, ecclesiastical matters, relations with Rome, instructions to ambassadors, and reports from governors. So widely spread and so varied were the attributes of the Senate, that the analysis of a single day's proceedings in that house would prove most instructive to the student of the Venetian constitution, and would, in all probability, bring him into contact with a large number of the leading magistracies of the Republic. The series of



senatorial papers proceeds in almost unbroken completeness from the year 1293 down to the close of the Republic; and, counting files, registers, and rubrics, numbers 1599 volumes. This main series is known by different names at different periods, and shows signs of that tendency to subdivision which characterizes all Venetian government offices. The volumes which run from the year 1293 to 1440 were known as "Registri misti"; those covering from 1491 to 1630 were called "Registri secreti." After the year 1630 the papers of the Senate are divided into those known as "Corti," relating to foreign powers; and those known as "Rettori," relating to the government of the Venetian dominion.

Besides this great series of "Deliberazioni," containing the general movement of business in the Senate, there is another voluminous series of documents, equally important, and even more interesting to the student of general history—the despatches received from Venetian representatives at foreign courts, and the "Relazioni," or reports which ambassadors read before the Senate upon their return from abroad. Nothing can exceed the brilliancy of this series; and the value of the "Relazioni" at least has been fully recognized. Yet it should be borne in mind that the "Relazioni" are only a part of the series, and that, taken alone and isolated from the despatches, they lose much of their value. For we must not forget that the "Relazioni" were drawn up on more or less conventional lines; the headings, under which the report was to fall, were indicated by the government, and were invariable; and, further, the home-coming ambassador handed his report to his successor, who frequently used it as a basis in drawing up his own. The result is that, except in the descriptions of court life and in the sketches of prominent characters, the "Relazioni" are apt to repeat themselves. But, taken with the despatches, which arrived almost daily, they form the most varied, brilliant, and minute gallery of

national portraits that the world possesses. The reports and despatches were made by men whose whole political training had rendered them the acutest of observers, and they were presented to critics who were filled with the keenest curiosity, and were accustomed to demand full and precise information. Not a detail is omitted as unimportant; the diurnal gossip of the court, the daily movements of the sovereign and his favourites, are all recorded with impartial and unerring observation. The relation of the "Dispacci" to the "Relazioni" is the relation of the study to the picture. The "Relazioni" are the large canvas upon which the whole nation is broadly depicted, the "Dispacci" are the patient and minute studies upon which the excellence of the picture depends. The majority of the Venetian "Relazioni" between the years 1492 and 1699 have been published; the earlier part by Signor Alberi, and the later by Signori Barozzi and Berchet. The eighteenth century still remains to be worked out. In the series of "Relazioni" and "Dispacci," Great Britain occupies a comparatively small space. While France, Germany, and Constantinople each give five volumes of reports, England gives one only, dating from 1531 to 1773. Of despatches from England there were 139 volumes in all; while from Constantinople we have 242, from France 276, from Milan 230, and from Germany 202.

Previous to the year 1603, when the regular series of despatches from England begins, there had been intermittent relations between the Republic and the English court. Sebastian Giustiniani was Venetian ambassador in London in the reign of Henry VIII. (1515-1519); and in the reign of Mary, Giovanni Michiel represented the Republic for four years—from 1554 to 1558. The Protestant reign of Elizabeth caused a long break, during which the Republic received its information about the affairs of England from its ambassadors in France and Spain. Permanent relations were not resumed between the two powers till

the accession of James I., one of whose earliest acts was to send Sir Henry Wotton to Venice as his ambassador. The appointment of Sir Henry Wotton was a movement of gratitude on the part of the king; and the cause of it cannot be better told than in the words of Sir Henry's biographer, who thus describes this "notable accident":

"Immediately after Sir Henry Wotton's return from Rome to Florence—which was about a year before the death of Queen Elizabeth—Ferdinand the Great, Duke of Tuscany, had intercepted certain letters, that discovered a design to take away the life of James, the then King of Scots. The duke abhorring this fact, and resolving to endeavour a prevention of it, advised with his secretary Vietta, by what means a caution might be best given to that king; and after consideration it was resolved to be done by Sir Henry Wotton, whom Vietta first commended to the duke, and the duke had noted and approved of above all the English that frequented his court.

"Sir Henry was gladly called by his friend Vietta to the duke, who despatched him into Scotland with letters to the king, and with those letters such Italian antidotes against poison as the Scots till then had been strangers to.

"Having parted from the duke, he took up the name and language of an Italian; and thinking it best to avoid the line of English intelligence and danger, he posted into Norway, and through that country towards Scotland, where he found the king at Stirling. Being there, he used means, by Bernard Lindsey, one of the king's bed-chamber, to procure him a speedy and private conference with his Majesty.

"This being by Bernard Lindsey made known to the king, the king required his name—which was said to be Octavio Baldi—and appointed him to be heard privately at a fixed hour that evening.

"When Octavio Baldi came to the presence-chamber



door, he was requested to lay aside his long rapier,—which, Italian-like, he then wore ;—and being entered the chamber, he found there with the king three or four Scotch lords standing distant in several corners of the chamber ; at the sight of whom he made a stand ; which the king observing, bade him be bold and deliver his message ; for he would undertake for the secrecy of all that were present. Then did Octavio Baldi deliver his letters and message to the king in Italian ; which when the King had graciously received, after a little pause, Octavio Baldi steps to the table, and whispers to the king in his own language, that he was an Englishman, beseeching him for a more private conference with his Majesty, and that he might be concealed during his stay in that nation ; which was promised and really performed by the king, during all his abode there, which was about three months. All which time was spent with much pleasantness to the king, and with as much to Octavio Baldi himself as that country could afford ; from which he departed as true an Italian as he came thither."

The presence of Sir Henry in Venice, where he was a *persona gratissima*, both on account of his love for Italy and his knowledge of the language, did much to strengthen the new relations between England and the Republic. The feeling between Venice and the Stuart kings became extremely cordial ; but on the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1642, the Republic suspended the commission of Vincenzo Contarini, who had been appointed to succeed Giovanni Giustinian as ambassador to England. The secretary Girolamo Agostino, however, continued to discharge Venetian affairs till the year 1645 ; and his despatches contain minute particulars concerning the progress of the Civil War. In the year 1645, Agostino was recalled, and the interests of Venice in England were entrusted to Salvetti, the Florentine resident. Agostino left behind him in England a secret agent, with instructions to forward a weekly report on the progress of affairs to the Venetian

ambassador in France, among whose despatches we find these news-letters from London. After the death of Charles I. it is not likely that the Republic would have been represented at the court of Cromwell, towards whom the feeling of Venice was not cordial, had she not been in great straits for help against the Turk. But in the year 1652 she resolved to dismiss the representative of Charles II., then in Venice; and, at the same time, the government instructed the ambassador at Paris to send his secretary, Lorenzo Pauluzzi, to London to open negotiations with Cromwell. With Pauluzzi the series of despatches from London recommences; but these despatches are to be found among the communications from the Venetian ambassador in Paris, by whom they were forwarded to the Senate. The despatches of Pauluzzi are of great importance, and give us a vivid though hostile picture of Cromwell and his surroundings. In 1655 the negotiations between England and Venice had advanced so far that the Republic had determined to send an ambassador extraordinary to the Protector's court. Giovanni Sagredo, ambassador at Paris, was chosen. The result of Sagredo's mission is contained in the long and brilliant *relazione* which he read in the Senate on his return to Venice in 1656. In this splendid specimen of a Venetian report, to which we shall return in a subsequent essay, Sagredo gives, with singular lucidity and grasp, a brief sketch of the condition of Great Britain; of the causes of the Civil War; of Cromwell's rise to power; of his foreign relations; and closes with a portrait of the Protector which confirms Pauluzzi's unfavourable view, and draws a terrible picture of that restlessness and dread which clouded Cromwell's last days—"più temuto che amato . . . vive con sempiterno sospetto." When Sagredo returned to Venice, his secretary, Francesco Giavarnia, was left behind in England, as Venetian resident, and continued to hold that post till the Restoration, sending despatches every week direct to Venice, detailing the close of the Pro-

tectorate, and the return of Charles II., whom he was the first to welcome at Canterbury the day after his landing. In 1661 the Republic gladly reopened full relations with the Stuarts. Giavarnia was superseded by two ambassadors extraordinary, who conveyed to Charles two gondolas for the water in St. James's Park, and from that date onwards the diplomatic connection between England and the Republic followed the ordinary course.

We come now to the papers of the Council of Ten ; all of these were committed to the custody of the secret chancellery. We have already seen that the Council of Ten was an extraordinary office, used upon extraordinary occasions, where secrecy and speed were required. Its chief occupations may be summed up under three heads—safety of the state, protection of citizens, and public morals. That being the case, the number and interest of its documents are very great—greater than those of any other council of state ; but this interest is confined, for the most part, to matters affecting the home policy of the Republic ; foreign affairs find comparatively little illustration among the papers of the Ten. The series of documents, containing the ordinary business of the Ten, dates from the year 1315 to the close of the Republic. The documents are arranged according to the matter they deal with ; that is to say, political matter (*parti communi* and *secreti*), ecclesiastical matter (*parti Roma*), or criminal matter (*processi criminali*). The immense importance and interest attaching to the papers of the Ten will be illustrated by the statement that there we find such papers as still survive in connection with the cases of the Carraresi, of Carmagnola, of Foscari, of Caterina Cornaro, and of Foscari.

Among the papers of the Collegio we find ourselves once more in the general current of foreign politics. The ordinary proceedings of the College, the papers containing the arrangement and discussion of affairs to be presented to the Senate, are included in the volumes



of files and registers, known as the "Notatorii del Collegio." We also have the two important series of "Lettere" and "Lettere secrete." The College was entrusted, as we have said, to receive all the representatives of foreign powers and to open all letters and despatches addressed to the government. It is in the three series known as "Lettere Principi," "Esposizioni Principi," and "Ceremoniali," that we obtain the fullest information about the action of the agents from foreign courts resident in Venice. The series called "Lettere Principi," letters from royal personages, covers the years between 1500 and 1797, and is contained in fifty-four volumes of *filze*. England is represented by two of these, beginning with the year 1570, and ending with 1796, entitled "Collegio, Secreta, Lettere. Rè e Regina d'Inghilterra." These volumes contain one hundred and seventy-one letters, thus distributed among the various sovereigns: there are thirteen in the reign of Elizabeth; forty in that of James I.; four in that of Charles I.; three from Oliver Cromwell; one from Richard Cromwell; one from Speaker Lenthall; ten during the reign of Charles II.; five during that of his brother; three during the reign of William, including one from the Chevalier; seven in the reign of Anne; eight in that of George I.; twenty-one from George II.; and fifty-five from George III. These letters are concerned with formal announcements and the exchange of courtesies, the credentials of ambassadors, and notices of royal births, marriages, and deaths. Their historical importance is very slight. The long series of George III. is almost entirely occupied by noting the yearly increase of his family. The autographs of the ministers who countersigned the letters form their greatest attraction. The late Mr. Rawdon Brown has published facsimiles of these autographs down to the year 1659; but after that date we find such interesting endorsements as those of Lauderdale, Arlington, Bolingbroke, Carteret, Pitt, Halifax, Henry Conway, Shelburne, and Charles James

Fox. On a loose parchment among these letters is one very curious document. It is dated Bologna, February 21, 1671, and begins "Carlo Dudley per la gratia di Dio duca di Northumbria et del Sacro Romano Impero, conte di Woruih e di Leicester, et Pari d'Ingliterra." The document goes on to state that Charles Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, in consideration of the affection and partiality always shown towards his person and house, grants to Ottavio Dionisio, noble of Verona, the title of marquis to him and to his eldest son, to his younger sons and to his brothers and their sons, the title of count, in perpetuity; and this in virtue of the declaration and authority of his Holiness Pope Urban VIII., which conferred on Charles Dudley and his eldest born the right to exercise all the privileges of an independent prince. At the date which this document bears, 1671, there was no Duke of Northumberland; that title had lately been bestowed by Charles II. on an illegitimate son, and had perished with him. This Charles Dudley was perhaps a son of Sir Robert Dudley, who settled in Florence and made the port of Leghorn. The document is curious, for the noble family on whom Charles Dudley conferred this title of marquis still exists, and we do not know that any British subject, either before or after, has ever claimed to be a fountain of honour. But Charles Dudley is not the only English pretender who figures among the papers at the Frari. *Filza* 8 of the loose papers, titled "Miscellanea Diversi Manoscritti," contains the marriage certificate and will of James Henry de Boveri Rossano Stuart, natural son of Charles II., and seven letters from his son James Stuart, dated Milan, Gemonia, and Padua, 1722 to 1728. The majority of these letters are addressed to Cardinal Panighetti, from whom this "povero principe Stuardo," as he calls himself, hoped to receive money and support in some imaginary claims on the Crown of England. The letters are full of a certain pathos—the pathos which

cannot fail to attach itself to fallen royalty. The handwriting is that of an uneducated man ; and James Stuart, in these letters, certainly shows no signs of the ability required to meet so trying a situation. He appeals to the cardinal first on the grounds of his creed. It is "for the faith that he finds himself in the miserable little town" of Gemonia. Failing upon this line, James Stuart abandons himself to astrology, in the hope that the stars may give an answer favourable to his hopes. But to all his appeals the cardinal replies with cold reserve, and when he hears of astrology, he adds a sharp and crushing reprimand.

Leaving the "Lettere Principi," we come to the last two series of state papers of which we shall speak, the "Esposizioni Principi," or record of all audiences granted to ambassadors, and of the communications made by them in the name of the power they represented ; and the "Libri Ceremoniali," or record of the great functions of state, the coronations and funerals of the doges, the elections of the grand chancellors, the reception accorded to ambassadors, princes, and distinguished travellers. The Republic of Venice was as punctilious as any court of Europe upon the points of precedence, ceremony, and etiquette. The reader will not have forgotten the amusing account, given by the elder Disraeli, of the long struggle between the master of the ceremonies and the Venetian ambassador at the court of St. James. The government required from its representatives a minute report on every detail of etiquette observed towards them, and replied in kind in their treatment of foreign ministers in Venice. The Republic was punctilious abroad, and no less so at home. Every stage in the public entry, first audience, and *congé* of foreign ambassadors was carefully regulated and based upon precedent. The ambassadors of Spain and France had each a special volume devoted to the ceremonies and etiquette which the Republic observed towards them. M. Baschet describes at length the receptions of the French



ambassadors, for whom he claims the highest rank among the representatives of foreign powers at Venice. Great Britain sent fifty-eight embassies, in all, to the Republic, between the years 1340 and 1797. Of these ambassadors, Sir Gregory Cassalis filled the office twice, Sir Henry Wotton thrice, the Earl of Manchester twice, and Elizeus Burgess twice. The ceremony to which the ambassador was entitled may be gathered from the accounts of these embassies preserved in the "*Esposizioni Principi*" and the "*Ceremoniali*."

The reception of Lord Northampton in the year 1762 will afford us the most detailed view of the ceremony, for on that occasion some questions of precedence arose, and the Cavaliere Ruzzini, who was entrusted with the conduct of the affair, presented a long report to the Senate on the subject. The ambassador was not officially recognized by the government until he had made his public entry, and presented his credentials at his first audience in the College. Until that had taken place, he remained incognito, and was, in fact, supposed not to be in Venice. Before the ambassador arrived, the English consul was expected to hire a palace for his use. There was no fixed embassy in Venice; Thomas Killigrew lodged at San Cassano, Lord Holderness at San Benedetto, Lord Manchester at San Stae. John Udney, who was consul at the time of Lord Northampton's embassy, rented the Palazzo Grimani at San Girolamo in the Canaregio for the ambassador whenever his appointment was announced, and an amusing and characteristic story attaches to this affair. The palace belonged to a Contessa Grimani, and was in bad repair; but the owner promised to restore and fit it up for the ambassador. When the consul went to see the palace, shortly before the ambassador's arrival, he found that nothing had been done to it, and moreover that a gondolier and his wife occupied the ground-floor and refused to move. He wrote at

once to the contessa requesting her to dislodge the gondolier, to which he received for answer that the gondolier's wife had been nurse to one of the countess's boys, and the Grimani had promised her twenty ducats a year; if the ambassador liked to pay that amount, the gondolier would turn out; if not, they must manage to share the palace between them. The consul appealed to the English resident, John Murray, who wrote an angry letter to the government, complaining of this treatment. "*La carità della nobile donna,*" he says, "*verso la moglie del gondoliere merita senza dubbio gran lode, ma il sottoscritto s'imagina che l'avvocato più scaltro si troverebbe bene intrigato di produrre una legge o esempio per incaricare l'Ambasciatore Inglese di questa carità.*"

The matter was probably arranged, for on October 22 Lord Northampton arrived, incognito of course, with all his suite, and took up his residence. Lord Northampton was ill, and it was not till the beginning of the next year that he took the necessary step to make his entry and to secure his first audience. The etiquette observed upon such occasions required that the ambassador should send his secretary to leave copies of his credentials at the door of the College, and to ask on what day the doge would receive him. The College reply through one of their secretaries that an answer will be sent. The doge was then consulted what day would suit him, and he answers by putting himself at the disposal of the College. The Senate is then informed of the ambassador's arrival, and sixty senators, under the direction of a leader, are appointed to attend the ambassador until the ceremonies of his reception shall be completed. The days selected for Lord Northampton's reception were May 29 and 30, 1763; and the Cavaliere Ruzzini was named as head of the sixty senators who were to attend the ambassador. Ruzzini informed Lord Northampton of these arrangements, and at the same time sent him a programme of the

ceremony, which was based upon that observed towards Lord Holderness, and was identical with that which the Republic offered to the ambassador of the King of Sardinia. Before his public entry, the ambassador and his suite went to the island of San Spirito, in the lagoon towards Malamocco. The fiction of the ceremony supposed all ambassadors to be lodged there until they had presented their credentials. San Spirito was chosen as the point of departure for the ambassadorial procession because the distance between that island and Venice was supposed to correspond exactly with the distance between London and Greenwich, whence the Venetian ambassador was wont to begin his progress. Sir Henry Wotton's second embassy forms a rare exception to this rule, for the Venetians were so fond of that charming and accomplished poet, that they allowed him to make his entry from San Giorgio Maggiore, which is much nearer the city and more convenient. After midday on the 29th, Ruzzini and his sixty senators, each in his gondola, arrived at San Spirito, and found the household of the ambassador drawn up along the landing-place *en grande tenue*. Lord Northampton was informed of Ruzzini's arrival, and came to meet him on the staircase. After exchanging the prescribed compliments, Ruzzini, with the ambassador on his right hand, descended, and both entered the cavaliere's gondola. The whole procession left San Spirito, and proceeded by the Grand Canal to the ambassador's lodging at San Girolamo, accompanied, as Ruzzini says, by "un immenso popolo spettatore del nostro viaggio"; for these official entries were among the most popular of the Venetian spectacles, and the whole city went out to witness them. At the palace fresh speeches and compliments followed. Lord Northampton was suffering acutely from an illness of which he died that same year, but Ruzzini reports with obvious satisfaction that he did not spare him a single ceremony,



"adempi ad ogni parte del consueto ceremoniale." The next day Ruzzini and the sixty senators again attended at the ambassador's palace to conduct him to his audience in the College. Lord Northampton was worse than he had been the day before; but Ruzzini was implacable. It cost the ambassador three-quarters of an hour to ascend the Giant's Stair. When at last he reached the door of the Collegio, the doge and all the College rose; the ambassador uncovered and made three bows, and, leaving his suite behind him, he mounted the daïs and took his seat on the right hand of the doge. The ambassador then covered his head, and simultaneously one of each order of the savii did the same. The ambassador handed his credentials to the doge, and remained uncovered while they were being read. The doge made a brief and formal reply welcoming the ambassador to Venice, and each time the king's name occurred, the ambassador raised his cap. After repeating his three bows, the ambassador retired, and was accompanied to his palace by the sixty senators who had waited for him at the doors of the Collegio. This closed the ceremony of entry.

The English ambassador extraordinary enjoyed certain privileges, which were established on the precedent of the embassy of Lord Falconberg, Cromwell's son-in-law. Among these privileges was the right to lodging and maintenance at the cost of the Republic, a right which the ambassador usually compounded for the sum of five or six hundred ducats; a box at each theatre in Venice was placed at his disposal; and when he took his *congé* the Senate voted him a gold chain and medal of the value of two thousand scudi. The ambassadors ordinary enjoyed certain exemptions from customs dues. These exemptions were frequently abused, and were the cause of constant friction between the government and the representatives of foreign powers. In the year 1763 Mr. John Murray's Istrian wine was seized,

and he only recovered it after expressing himself *ben mortificato*. Mr. Murray was constantly in trouble on this subject. The year before he had addressed an indignant letter to the government because "a certain official of the custom-house had accused him of allowing his servants to sell wine and flour at the door of the residency. It is but a poor satisfaction after so long a period of suspicion to know that that official is bankrupt and no proof of the accusation is forthcoming." But by far the most curious episode of this nature was that which befell Tom Killigrew, the poet, grandfather of the Mrs. Anne Killigrew of Dryden's famous ode and a friend of Pepys, who recalls him as "a merry droll, but a gentleman of great esteem with the king, who told us many merry stories," this, perhaps, among the number. Killigrew was sent to represent Charles II. at Venice in 1649, just after the execution of Charles I., and while his son was *a ramingo*, or knocking about, as the Venetian ambassador politely puts it. Killigrew was received in the usual way on February 10, 1650, and made his address *in lingua cattiva*, as the report affirms. But the Republic tired of its alliance with an exiled king, and resolved to dismiss Killigrew as soon as possible. Killigrew was poor, and his master had little or nothing to give him, so he hit upon the expedient of keeping a butcher's shop, where he could sell meat cheaper than any one else in Venice, by availing himself of his exemptions from *octroi*. The Senate resolved to fasten upon this illicit traffic as a pretext for dismissing Killigrew; and on June 22, 1652, they sent their secretary, Busenello, to tell Killigrew, *viva voce*, that he must go. Busenello went to San Fantin, and there found one of Killigrew's butchers, who told him that the resident only kept his shop there, but lived himself at San Cassano. At San Cassano Busenello was told that Killigrew was dining at Murano, and would not be home till evening; but very soon after he saw the resident at

his window, and insisted on being announced. He explained "with all possible delicacy," as he says, the order of the Senate; but Killigrew received the message with every sign of anger and pain. With tears in his eyes he declared that it was the other ambassadors who robbed the customs, while he had all the blame. It was true that he did keep "a little bit of a butcher's shop to support himself," but that could not hurt the revenue; and he added that, under any circumstance, he should leave Venice, for he had received his letters of recall from France four days previously. The Senate no more than their secretary believed in the existence of this letter of recall; but Killigrew really had the letter, dated March 14, and it was sent into the College, along with a brief exculpatory epistle from the resident, on June 27. Killigrew left Venice the same day, as he was bound to do by ambassadorial etiquette; and Charles had not another recognized agent to the Republic until his restoration; for the Venetians definitely adopted the policy of courting Cromwell, in the vain hope that he would assist them against the Turk.

With the papers of the College we close this notice of the political documents in the archives at the Frari. The other departments of the government had each their own series of papers, equally copious and valuable. The heraldic and genealogical archives of the *Avvogadori di Commun*, for example, the charters of the German and Turkish exchanges, and the records of the mint and the public banks, offer a wide and a rich field for study; and in spite of the profound and extensive labours of scholars, it will be long before the materials in the vast storehouse of the Frari are exhausted or even adequately displayed.



## The Commercial and Fiscal Policy of the Venetian Republic

It is not our intention in this essay to follow the history of Venetian commerce, nor to illustrate its rise and decline during the four hundred years that Venice led the trade of the world and was the greatest sea-power in Europe, but rather, if possible, to extract from the course of that history, and from the legislation adopted by the Republic, the leading ideas, the fundamental conceptions, which governed her commercial and fiscal policy. The external history and the internal legislation are, of course, intimately connected, but it is with the latter that we are now chiefly concerned.

The task presents some difficulty, for, though the history of Venice has been handled from the commercial point of view by such writers as Marin<sup>1</sup> and Sandi,<sup>2</sup> these authorities are occupied with the strictly political, rather than with the economic, aspect of the subject; no attempt, except in the case of the inedited treatise by Pier Giovanni Capello,<sup>3</sup> has been made to observe and set forth the economic principles which underlay Venetian fiscal legislation.

No doubt the study of economics as a science had

<sup>1</sup> Marin, *Storia civile e politica del Commercio de' Veneziani* (in Vinegia: 1791).

<sup>2</sup> Sandi, *Principii della Storia civile della Repubblica di Venezia* (Venezia: 1755).

<sup>3</sup> Pier Giovanni Capello, *Principii, ovvero massime regolatrici di Commercio raccolte dalle Leggi e Documenti della Repubblica di Venezia*. MS. inedited. (Library R. Scuola Superiore di Commercio, Venice).

hardly come into being when the Venetian Republic fell. Colbert's action in France had been noted, but chiefly for its results, not for its ideas—the state of Venice was Colbertian in practice long before Colbert—while the doctrines of Adam Smith had not found time to spread from Kirkcaldy to the Lagoons. No body of economic laws had as yet been induced from experience, and legislation was empirical. As regards the Republic in particular—just as a healthy body is unconscious of organs, so the state, while thriving commercially, was unconscious of the principles that governed her economic well-being. It was not till her commerce began to decline that Venice became aware of the uneasiness produced by thwarted functions; and although, as we shall see, there were not wanting bold spirits to speak their mind in the Senate, or to commit their thoughts to paper, indicating the mischief and suggesting a remedy, still the jealous conservatism of the Venetian Republic, its repugnance to lay bare defects, forbade publication. We must turn to the storehouse of the Frari, to the mass of inedited papers it contains, if we desire light on the matter in hand.<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Venice has justly been compared to a joint-stock company for the exploitation of the East. The board of directors was the Senate, the citizens of Venice the shareholders. The vast majority of the senators were men of business, engaged actively in traffic, and from them emanated the regulations which governed Venetian commerce—the choice of trade routes, the appointment of consuls, the directions for the mercantile marine, the imposition of customs, the formation of tariffs. In short, the fundamental idea of “the Mercantile System” prevailed in early Venice as it prevailed much later in Elizabethan England. The State undertook “to foster economic life.” But the Senate was a large body, numbering one hundred and

<sup>1</sup> *Reggio Archivio di Stato*, Venice. Papers of the Provveditori di Comun; Papers of the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia; Deliberations of the Senate; Minutes of Audiences.

eighty members, and was, moreover, occupied with branches of legislation other than commercial. Many of its functions and much of its power were gradually delegated to special boards—the “Provveditori di Comun,” which, for the purposes of this essay, we may call the board of manufactures, under whose supervision came the arts and crafts of the city, though it also discharged other functions; and the “Cinque Savii alla Mercantia,” or board of trade, which dealt with Venetian commerce, maritime and inland. Both boards were advisory and executive, and it is in the records of these two offices that we are best able to follow the movement of Venetian industry, trade, and commerce; while in the “Risposte” and “Scritture,” or opinions submitted to the Senate, we find the basis and the motives for the legislation enacted by that body.

We have one other manuscript authority of considerable value. About 1730 Pier Giovanni Capello, patrician, senator, and one-time member of the board of trade, compiled an economic treatise in two parts: one deals with commercial principles as gathered from universal practice, the other sets forth the principles which governed the conduct of the Venetian Republic in particular. Coming late in the history of the state, Capello, in his treatise, lays down the doctrines upon which he bases the remedies he would apply to the ills from which commercial Venice was suffering. He is, for example, firmly convinced that the consumer pays the whole of the difference between initial cost-price and final selling-price, or profit, as we say; the consumer being, in the case of Venice, the great foreign markets. “Whence,” he asks, “come these profits? Most assuredly, and beyond all doubt, they come out of the pockets of the last purchasers.” The trader’s gross profit, he says, is the difference between the price he pays to the producer and the price at which he sells to the dealer. Capello dwells on this point because he has in his mind the main branch



of Venetian commerce—the carrying trade, whose fundamental principle it was that the owner of the goods and the carrier of the goods should, as far as possible, be one and the same person, the Venetian merchant. Capello is a convinced protectionist, but also a “free-fooder.” “It would produce,” he remarks, “an excellent effect if the taxes on bread and wine were repealed, and would bring about a notable gain to industry and trade.” This is a principle which seems to have dominated Venetian fiscal policy from early days. In 1462, when the state was raising money for war purposes, we find the following entry in Malipiero’s *Annali*: “Che tutte le mercanzie che intra per via de mar, *eccettuade le vittuarie*, paghi uno per cento a la guerra.”<sup>1</sup> In the course of this essay we shall frequently refer to Capello’s doctrines as applied to the commerce of his native state. His treatise may be met with in various codices. The one we have used belongs to the Reggia Scuola superiore di Commercio in Venice. Our thanks are due for permission to consult it.

The commercial policy of a state is governed by three main factors—geographical position, natural products, and the course of events. A glance at the map of Europe will show us at once the paramount importance of the geographical position enjoyed by Venice as long as the Mediterranean continued to be the chief trade-route of the world. Lying at the head of a long water avenue—trending east and west—Venice was the port farthest into the heart of Europe, and lay on the directest line between extreme east and extreme west. She was indicated by nature as the point of distribution: at Venice merchants came nearest to their markets without breaking bulk. She was also the natural focus of transit; the arteries of commerce between England, Flanders, France, Germany, on the one hand, and Turkey, Egypt, Syria,

<sup>1</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, tom. vii. (Florence : 1843), part i. p. 13.

Persia, and India on the other, passed through her port. Take any other point, Brindisi, for example: the merchant who landed his goods there would have had to convey them through the kingdom of Naples, the states of the Church, Ferrara, Venice herself, and she held the passes; or, take Salonica: that route was extremely dangerous then, and is not safe now; any port farther west was too far west for Central Europe, and, moreover, the waters that led to it were swarming with pirates. As regards natural products, Venice was poorly off. But she possessed one of prime importance—namely, salt, which in the course of her early history gave her a decided hold over her neighbours on the mainland, and, in a certain way and on the smaller scale of those earlier days, may almost be compared with England's virtual monopoly of coal. Salt was a necessity of life to her neighbours. Cassiodorus observed, when discussing the Lagoons, that men may live without gold or silver, but not without salt. Venice was alive to her advantage, and went to war to preserve her monopoly. The mainlanders were forced to come into Venice for their salt; they brought their native produce with them, and took away some of the goods that Venice was accumulating by sea, thus materially adding to the wealth of the city. As to the course of events, it was events such as the Fourth Crusade that built up Venetian commerce in the Mediterranean; it was events such as the advent of the Turk and the discovery of the Cape route that pulled that structure down.

Geographical position and natural products, then, indicated Venice as an emporium city, a mart for the distribution of goods east and west; the course of events ensured her that place. The conquest of the Dalmatian pirates gave her the command of the Adriatic, which she policed; the upshot of the Fourth Crusade left her supreme in the Levant. The dangers which threatened her position as an emporium—perils of the sea from storms and pirates—she met by skilled

seamanship and a powerful fleet patrol. All down her history the fundamental commercial idea of the state was the establishment of herself as the great receiver and distributor. That she was a producer as well—a manufacturer to some extent—is true; but she looked upon her produce chiefly as a subsidiary means for adding to the volume of goods she could supply to foreigners. Her foreign trade absorbed most of her attention. She never lost sight of her position as the mart of Europe, the place of contract, *il luogo di contratto*.

The feeder of this emporium, this reservoir of capital in goods, was twofold, home and foreign. The home feeder gave natural produce, chiefly salt and salted fish, as well as some manufactures, with which we shall have to deal when we come to the question of protection. The foreign feeder, by far the more copious, gave "omnes de partibus ultramarinis divitias," the richness and variety of which belong to common knowledge. The valves which regulated the inflow and outflow of this reservoir were a double taxation on imports and exports. By means of this instrument the supply of goods could be regulated and over-stocking or depletion rectified by raising the import and lowering the export dues in the one case; by reversing the process in the other.

That the Venetians were fully alive to the value of their position as an emporium is clear. Their salt monopoly gave them their first advantage over their neighbours on the mainland, but their imports by sea soon placed in their hands the command of many luxuries in addition to their hold over one prime necessity. Nor were they slow to use their advantage. The threat of a boycott was sufficient to induce the neighbouring princes to grant them preferential tariffs, only-favoured-nation treaties, and, in some cases, even monopolies of market. Two instances out of many will serve. In the thirteenth century John, Bishop of Belluno, refused a Venetian demand,



but "Dux salubri usus consilio statuit ut Veneti prædictam Marchiam ausi non forent adire vel cum eis commercia agere. Unde incolæ regionis illius carentes sale et aliis rebus maritimis, pacem a Venetiis petierunt"; and in 1332 Luigi Gonzaga, unable to resist the Venetian threat to withdraw commerce unless indemnified for injury to Venetian traders, made his submission and paid the claim. The Venetians were masters of the situation, and their preferential treatment in the mainland markets of Northern Italy enabled them to pursue the policy Capello ascribes to them of outbidding at purchase and underselling at sale, a policy which proves that they were conscious of their power as an emporium, and were determined to retain it by securing a monopoly. At purchase they outbid competitors and left them with no stock wherewith to trade. At sale they undersold competitors and so kept the market. But both operations depended for their ultimate success upon the existence of a great reservoir of goods in reserve. When the purchase market was cleared of rivals, Venetian prices could drop. When the sale market was cleared of rivals, Venetian prices could rise. Recoupment for outbidding and underselling was secured. State regulations obeying, perhaps unconsciously, the idea of the community as a joint-stock company, prevented internal competition. No individual Venetian was permitted to spoil the market. It was Venice united against the world.

But this commanding position depended on certain conditions, some of which were beyond the control of the Venetians, others amenable to their action. The essential factor in success was that the trade route of the world should continue to pass their way, and that they should retain the command of that route; for Venice was not primarily a manufacturing state, and even in so far as she was a producer her activity depended largely on the introduction of sea-borne material. The route and the command of it

were the vital points, and the latter depended for its security on the ships and the men. We shall presently find that Venetian legislation, in defence of her commercial position, is directed chiefly to these points, the preservation of her position as an emporium and the command of the trade route by the formation and upkeep of an excellent mercantile marine. Venetian commercial history is the history of what took place along those lines. The Senate of the Republic seems to have grasped to the full Sir Walter Raleigh's dictum that "Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade. Whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself." It was this consideration which lent such importance to the question of the Adriatic, the question of the Gulf, as the Venetians called it in their desire to stamp it as their own *mare clausum*; and Sarpi, long before Captain Mahan, had seen and stated the essential point in the doctrine of sea-power, no less from the mercantile than from the naval point of view, when he declared that "*chi può venire per mare non è mai lontano.*"

The commercial action of Venice was directed to making herself the mart of the world; but we are able to observe the operation of an idea which confined that mart to the city of Venice alone, excluding the state of Venice and her subject lands. The theory of the *Dominante*, or ruling city, was this: that all goods of whatsoever kind or description, whether from subject lands to subject lands, or from foreign lands to foreign lands, must be brought into the city of Venice. The idea of the *Dominante* is expressed in the Proclamation of 1728: "*Sempre costante la publica massima di voler vincolato tutto lo Stato alla provista della Dominante per proprio uso delle merci maritime.*" If Zante wished to sell currants to England, those currants must be taken to Venice first, and there, and there only, could English merchants buy them. If Brescia and Bergamo wished to send

their clothes east, they must go into Venice first. All goods sent to the mainland must bear the mark of transit through Venice and be accompanied by a certificate of origin from Venice. This, doubtless, bore hard on Venetian subjects not living in the city itself, and, indeed, we find Bergamo protesting that it is "impossibile tollerare la spesa delli datii di questa città." But there appears to have been a double motive for this harsh treatment. In the first place, the *Dominante* was responsible for the protection of her subjects, and her coffers must be kept full; in the second place, she was thus enabled to tax her subjects very lightly. The success with which the Republic met the League of Cambray justifies her seemingly selfish policy. She was able to spend on those wars five million golden crowns, equal to ten million Spanish doubloons, and that when her whole mainland revenue was cut off and her mainland possessions were in the hands of the enemy; and as a reward for her mild taxation her mainland possessions returned to her of their own accord when the pressure of the hostile league was removed.

The root idea, then, of Venetian commercial policy was the accumulation of goods in the city for distribution. Where the goods are, there will the merchants be gathered together. As long as we have the goods, argued the Venetians, the merchants of the world must come to us; they will not come empty-handed. What they bring will replace what they take away, and we shall reap a profit on both transactions; the money we accumulate shall be devoted to the defence of our sea route and the improvement of our mercantile marine.

By the accident of her geographical position, by the courage of her arms, and the industry of her merchants, Venice succeeded in building up a commercial position unique in the mediæval world. She naturally resolved to keep the fruits for her own sole consumption, and to do this she adopted a very high form



of protection. We must now look a little more closely at what she had to protect and the way in which she did it.

First, as to her natural produce, salt. We have seen that the Republic was ready to make any infringement of her monopoly by neighbouring princes a *casus belli*; and salt remained a government monopoly down to the fall of the Republic, and is so still in the Kingdom of Italy. The area of diffusion, the whole state of Venice, and the amount of revenue remained fairly stable.

As to Venetian industries, there is a tendency among historians to minimise their importance, but, though traffic in foreign goods was undoubtedly the most important branch of her commercial activity, industries furnished no small part of the national wealth, and were carefully protected by the government. The main branches were glass, cloth, silk, leather, paper, soap, and their derivatives. Trade secrets were guarded by severe punishments. The exportation of raw material was forbidden—sand and alkali, for instance, in the interests of the glass trade, rags in the interest of the paper-makers. The government carried protection in some instances beyond high protective tariffs to the absolute prohibition of foreign goods, as in the case of cloth and silk, and that not merely against foreign goods properly so called, but against goods manufactured in other cities of the dominion. Take the case of Cremona in 1560. The board of trade was ordered to report on a petition from Cremona to be allowed to open a silk factory. It advised refusal on two grounds: (1) that “*portaria pregiudizio all’arte di questa città et deviarla quella con la quale si nutrisce una infinità de diversi operai*”; (2) that it would be impossible to resist other petitions if this were granted. Industries, however, which had been established before the Venetian occupation of mainland cities, such as the cloth factories of Bergamo, Brescia, and Padua, were not interfered with beyond the

compulsion to send the goods into Venice for distribution.

But not only were Venetian manufactures protected against foreign competition and in some cases against competition by co-nationals, they were further hedged in by the guild system inside Venice itself. Every trade and many subdivisions of trade—even down to sausage-making—were erected into guilds which were under the immediate control of the board of manufactures. The wide development of the guild system in Venice had a double significance in the economy of the state, one political, the other financial. In a close oligarchy such as the state of Venice—where all political power was concentrated in the hands of a caste—the life of the guilds afforded a safety-valve for the energies of the excluded ; while it was through the organization of the guilds that the state governed its industries and levied its taxation upon trade.

But more than this, so determined was Venice to wring the fullest advantage out of her unique position, that freedom of contract was denied to foreign merchants. The foreigner was forbidden to buy direct from the Venetian producer or importer ; he was obliged to employ a Venetian broker, through whom the government levied its tax on purchase and sale, the tax known as the *messetaria*.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the government was well aware of the importance of maintaining the high quality of Venetian goods which it was endeavouring to force upon the markets of the world, “che riescano le manifatture di Venezia della più esquisita perfezione ; anzi per esse leggi è prescritto il metodo a ciaschedun’ arte di ben lavorare acciochè le manifatture loro siano grate a’ compratori.” Rules for the proper manufacture of goods were formulated and government officers saw that they were carried out, and in case of failure the defective goods were destroyed. Two instances may serve by way of illustration. Early in the seventeenth

<sup>1</sup> See Orlandini, *op. cit.*

century the lieutenant grand vizir at Constantinople complained to the Venetian ambassador that the quality of Venetian woollens and silks had fallen off, "the only good thing about them," he declared, "is their name"; if this went on the vizir threatened to prevent Venetians from discharging such goods in Constantinople. The ambassador replied that the state regulations were excellent; every diligence was used to ensure superior quality; inferior qualities were burned in public. The bad quality found in Constantinople was introduced under the name of Venetian by Jews through the port of Ragusa.<sup>1</sup> The other instance occurred a little later: the soapmakers of Venice had left the city in large numbers and opened works outside the state, where they made inferior soap, and placed it on the market with the Venetian marks of the half-moon, the three chains, the dove, etc., underselling the genuine goods, and, what was worse, ruining the repute of the Venetian article. They were all ordered to return to Venice within three months.<sup>2</sup> This supervisory legislation, directed to maintaining the high quality of Venetian goods, was initiated in 1244. The date is important. Venice was then just beginning to feel the expansion of her commercial position as the result of the Fourth Crusade, and her action shows that she already conceived of the state as a solid whole, a firm in which her individual citizens were partners. It is the good name of the firm that her legislation was designed to preserve.

Coming now to her mercantile marine, in the protection of which the Venetians showed the greatest solicitude, two external events had secured for the Republic the carrying trade of the world. By the suppression of the Narentine pirates, she had obtained command of the Gulf—a command confirmed to her after the defeat of the Genoese in the war of Chioggia.

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio di Stati*, Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Costantinopoli, May 4, 1612.

<sup>2</sup> Capello, *op. cit.*



She claimed the Gulf *de jure belli*, and on the ground that she policed it. By the middle of the fourteenth century the term "the Gulf of Venice" was applied to the upper part of the Adriatic.<sup>1</sup> She laid down rules—such as the prohibition to foreign ships to cross the Gulf from one shore to another, the obligation on foreign shipping to discharge at least two-thirds of their cargoes in Venice on pain of being refused permission to take a return cargo, the right of search—all of which clearly embodied her claim. But her pretensions were not allowed to pass unchallenged, and a whole literature of international law sprang up round the subject. In the second place, by her action during the Fourth Crusade, Venice acquired the dominant position in the Levant. The Gulf and the Levant formed her trade route and governed her policy as regards her mercantile marine. The double achievement roused Venice to a consciousness of her prospects in the carrying trade, and that consciousness expressed itself in the *Statuti Nautici* (1229-55),<sup>2</sup> a code drawn up to govern the merchant service. The ruling idea was very much the same as that which inspired our own Navigation Act of 1651, the attempt to secure for Venetian bottoms the carrying trade of the world. Elaborate provisions were made to exclude the foreigner. No Venetian merchant might trade in foreign bottoms; no insurance could be effected on goods in foreign bottoms; no Venetian might sell his ships to a foreigner. The object was to secure, if possible, that the trader and the carrier should be one and the same person, the Venetian merchant, or, if separate persons, that both should at least be Venetians. Equal attention was paid to the quality of the ships

<sup>1</sup> See Lenel, *Die Entstehung der Vorherrschaft Venedigs an der Adria* (Strassburg : 1897), pp. 83, 84.

<sup>2</sup> The *Statuti Nautici* of Doge Tiepolo (1229) was first printed in 1477 by Filippo di Piero. The *Statuta et ordinamenta super navibus et alliis lignis* of the Doge Rinier Zeno (1255) has been edited by Sacerdoti and Predelli in the *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, tom. iv. See Molmenti, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 119.

and the crews. No ships might be built outside Venice ; this to ensure uniformity of build and identical behaviour under stress of weather, so as to enable a Venetian merchant fleet to keep company more easily. A load line was established ; large deck cargoes, as hindering the efficient handling of ships in storm or in action, besides endangering their stability, were strictly prohibited. The training of young officers and the quality of the crews received close attention. Every merchantman sailing from Venice was bound to take one or two young nobles as 'prentice hands ; these apprentices were allowed to carry a certain amount of cargo free of duty. These regulations gave a permanent training-school of two hundred cadets and upwards. The crews were to consist of either Venetian subjects or Greeks. To induce seamen to come to Venice, every mariner from outside the Adriatic was allowed to carry ten ducats' worth of goods free of duty. This cargo was stored on deck, but in case of jettison the value was made good by the owners. Mariners' pay could not be sequestrated for any debt whatsoever, public or private. Mariners detained in quarantine were to be regarded, as far as rations were concerned, as though they were at sea. Seamen's homes, founded by the piety of private individuals in many parts of Venice, were under state trusteeship, and might not be let or sold for any other purpose.

The regulations on this subject were calculated to maintain at a high level of efficiency the mercantile marine upon which Venice so largely depended for the influx of wealth.

The right to participate in this wealth—shareholder-ship, in fact, in this joint-stock concern, the commerce of Venice—was strictly defined and limited. In theory none but Venetian patricians and Venetian citizens (*cittadini originarii*) had a right to trade to the Levant. Those markets were regarded as the exclusive property of the state, acquired by arms and by treaties. But a modified form of citizenship (*de intus*) was conceded to

foreigners who for fifteen years consecutively had lived in Venice and paid their taxes. The citizenship *de intus* made a foreigner free of the city—that is to say, he became eligible for election by trade guilds, and acquired the right to carry on an industry. A still more extensive franchise (*de intus et extra*) could be acquired, with the consent of the government, by those who had resided for twenty-five years in Venice and paid their taxes. This citizenship entitled its holder to trade with the Levant on the same footing as the Venetian patrician or *cittadino originario*—that is to say, at a much lower rate of custom dues than that levied on foreigners.

Such were the lines upon which Venice created and absorbed, for her own benefit, the largest commercial business of the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance.

We must now consider the way in which the state secured its revenue from this wealth—that is to say, how it taxed trade and how it regulated its taxation.

Apart from the monopoly of salt, the government raised its revenue by taxation: the property tax (*decime*), stamp taxes on purchase and sale (*messetaria*), guild taxes (*tansa*), and so on. But the revenue which flowed directly from commerce was raised by the two great duties on imports and exports. Each of these customs had its own custom-house: the imports were taxed at the *Tola* (*tabula, tavola*) *da mar*, eventually known as the *Tola*, or *dogana dell' intrada*; the exports at the *Tola de' Lombardi*, a name which clearly indicates the earliest line of exportation, eventually known as the *Tola d' insida* (= *uscita*). But all goods which would now come under the head of excise, *octroi* or *dazio consumo* (*dazio di grassa*), such as grain, wine, oil, meat, vegetables, wood, stone, hemp, etc., had a separate custom-house; the duty on such goods being both light and fluctuating, it was considered undesirable to include them in the protection tariff, which was high and as permanent as the government could keep it.



The export duty was a nine per cent. *ad valorem* duty; the increase or decrease of the burden was effected by a revision of the tariff, not by an alteration of the duty. Capello lays it down as a maxim of Venetian fiscal policy that duties should never fluctuate, but that the tariff should from time to time declare the taxable value of goods subject to the duty. The intention was to prevent the foreign purchaser from reaping any benefit from the reduction of the burden. He was told that there was an unalterable export duty of nine per cent. on the value of the goods, but he was not shown the tariff which regulated that value. Rightly did Capello declare that "the tariff is a very subtle and secret affair, which binds together public economy and the movements of commerce for the good of the nation." "Never," he goes on, "could such a work issue worthily from the hands of mere clerks or of merchants whose sole eye is to their own private gain. The tariff should be drawn up by the government to meet the general needs of trade, viewed in its widest relations to the state. The merchant's part is to state the natural price, to indicate the places of manufacture and of sale; the regulation of the tariff belongs to government."

The import duty was also regulated by tariff. Capello cites an instance of the way in which a skilful manipulation of the tariff could be made to serve the intention of the government in the regulation of Venetian trade. The tariff on Apulian oil was considerably higher than on Corfiot oil, the object being to keep alive the oil trade in Corfu, so as to induce Venetian traders to go there. If Apulian oil cut out Corfiot and Ionian oil at Venice, as it naturally would, owing to its abundance, then the olive would go out of cultivation in the islands, for Venice was its only market, under the legislation which compelled all goods to be sent to the *Dominante* for distribution. If Ionian olives went out of cultivation, Corfu and the islands would not be able to furnish a return cargo,

and Venetian shipping would cease to touch at those ports. Therefore, in order to keep trade with the Ionian islands alive, it was desirable, among other steps, to penalise Apulian oil.

That the Venetian system of commercial policy was successful down to the opening of the sixteenth century is proved by her great wealth and the testimony of contemporaries to her unique commercial position. The apogee was reached, broadly speaking, between 1410 and 1490, and the death-bed speech of the Doge Mocenigo (1423), in which he reviewed the financial and commercial condition of the state, shows us the vigour, the extent, and the fruitfulness of Venetian trade. The speech is so well known—it is quoted by all the historians—that we need not recapitulate its statements. The key to the position lay in the direction of the trade route and the command of that route. Had not external events occurred which altered these essential conditions, there seems to be no reason why Venice should not have continued to be the master trader of the world, and to have reaped the fullest benefit therefrom through the operation of her highly protective system. She had no rival in the Mediterranean; her dependents would not break away from her as long as they were lightly taxed and protected; corruption of manners and indolence following on accumulated wealth and prolonged success seemed to be the only danger. But the course of events did change at four important points which claim our attention in as far as they affected Venetian commerce.

The fall of Constantinople and the advent of the Turk as a Mediterranean power robbed Venice of her undisputed supremacy in the Levant and exposed her to long and exhausting wars, which ended with the loss of two commanding points along her trade route, Cyprus and Crete.

The discovery of the Cape passage altered the trade route of the world and threw it out of the Mediter-

anean into the ocean. Merchants preferred the long sea passage to the shorter caravan route across Asia Minor; they avoided breaking bulk, and they were relieved from the dangers of Arab marauders and the heavy duties imposed by the Soldan of Egypt. But the result was that Venice lost the advantage of her geographical position. The great ports of discharge were transferred to Portugal, England, Holland. Protection was powerless to save Venetian commerce when there was nothing left to protect. For example, Madeira sugar in foreign bottoms came on the Venetian market, and, in spite of the high duty, cut out the sugar from Cyprus, Alexandria, Sicily, which was reduced to "vilissimo prezzo," and even at these lowest prices was unable to hold its own. With decline in the Levant trade came the decline in shipbuilding, the stagnation of Venetian industries which were fed by that trade, and eventually the investment of capital in government stocks and in land.

The League of Cambray, though it failed to achieve its object of partitioning Venice and did not deprive her of her land dominions, left her crippled by the exhausting drain of eight years' war; her treasury was depleted, and she never recovered her elasticity.

Finally, the defeat of the Armada and the achievement of Dutch independence brought both English and Dutch into the Mediterranean as trading competitors. The English secured their capitulations at Constantinople in 1583 through the ambassador Harborn, and the powerful Levant Company was soon trading vigorously in the East. The Dutch envoy, Cornelius van Haagen, was also successful in 1612. Both English and Dutch would have traded with Venice, but, as we shall presently see, the jealous conservatism of the Republic, its dogged adherence to the "maxims of our ancestors," prevented them from opening their port. The Grand Duke of Tuscany threw open Leghorn, Civita Vecchia was made



a free port, Marseilles also bid for the trade, and Venice, in spite of her superior geographical position, was left in a backwater.

There was no lack of commercial acumen in the Republic, and many of her merchant statesmen appreciated at once and to the full the significance of these events. This is what Priuli wrote in his Diary<sup>1</sup> on receipt of the news that the Cape route was discovered :

“All Venice was alarmed and amazed, and the wiser heads took it for the worst news that could have reached us. For every one knows that Venice has reached her commanding prestige and wealth solely by her mercantile marine, which brought in every year great store of spices, so that foreign merchants flocked to buy; and their presence and their business left us a large profit. But now by this new route the spices from the East will be carried to Lisbon, where Hungarians, Germans, Flemish, and French will go to purchase them, as they will be cheaper there than here. For the spices which reach Venice have to pass through Syria and the territories of the soldan, and everywhere they have to pay such exorbitant duties that by the time they reach Venice what cost a ducat to purchase will have to be sold for eighty or a hundred ducats. The sea route, on the other hand, is free from these burdens, and the Portuguese can sell at a lower rate. While the better heads see this, others refuse to believe the news, while others again declare that the King of Portugal cannot keep up this trade to Calicut, for out of thirteen carvels which he sent out, only six have come back safe, and so the loss will exceed the gain, nor can he easily find men to risk their lives in so long and perilous a voyage; again, it is urged that the soldan, when he realizes the danger to his revenue, will take steps—and so on, and so on; seeking, as usual, to find out reasons to support their hopes and refusing

<sup>1</sup> Priuli, *Diari*, in the *Archivio Veneto*, tom. i.

to hear and believe what is reported to their own hurt."

It may be asked, Why did not Venice adopt the new trade route herself? She was invited to by the King of Portugal; she still possessed a powerful fleet, and her seamen were inferior to none in training. But in the first place Gibraltar blocked the way. Spain would have stopped and taxed her there. Then she dared not offend the soldan by brusquely abandoning the Syria route from which he was drawing revenue. She contented herself with fruitlessly imploring him to lower his dues—a step which shows that she knew the Eastern route to be vital to her existence. Finally, the Venetian build of ships was designed for the Mediterranean waters; it was not suited to the ocean. Venice could not or would not change her build. Sir Paul Pindar and other distinguished Turkey merchants called the attention of the Venetian ambassador, Foscarini,<sup>1</sup> to this defect many years later, but without avail. The truth is that the discovery of the Cape route meant a dislocation of Venetian commerce and shipping so violent that it was past her power to remedy it. She did make one attempt to take the only effectual course for the recovery of the Eastern route upon which her commercial life depended. In 1504 she approached the soldan with proposals for cutting a Suez Canal,<sup>2</sup> and later on she instructed her ambassador at Constantinople to bring the subject before the sultan.<sup>3</sup> But Turkey was not master in Egypt, nor was the sultan eager to help his rival in the Levant to recover a lost position.

Venice was, indeed, hopelessly crippled. Her vitality as an emporium was undermined; the flow of goods which she could offer for sale gradually

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Inghilterra, Dec. 2, 1611.

<sup>2</sup> Fulin, "Il Canal di Suez e la Rep. di Venezia," *Arch. Ven.* tom. i.

<sup>3</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Costantinopoli, July 23, 1586.

dwindled. It is doubtful whether any change in her commercial and fiscal policy could have benefited her. She was not a great manufacturer, and the free trade panacea would not have found a field. She did not attempt it—even if she ever envisaged it. In the region of her industries she remained rigidly protectionist to the last. As regards her carrying trade and her port it was different. There she did make an attempt on the free trade lines, and the interest of her commercial history from 1550 onwards centres chiefly round this point.

The State Papers on this subject present us with a long series of laments on the slow decline of commerce. The Senate again and again record the fact and call on the board of trade to study the situation and to suggest remedies, with no better result than to confirm the "deep-seated distrust of the competence of legislatures" to discover "tonics to invigorate national commerce" when once a decline from natural causes has set in. A Venetian, reflecting on the situation, sums it up as follows :

"Our ancestors were brave, fierce, impatient of injuries, quick to strike, prone to fight. Now we are of milder mind, meek, long-suffering, shy of a blow, shrinking from war. And this, I take it, because in the olden times we all lived by trading and not on fixed incomes ; we spent many years of our lives away from home in distant lands, where we dealt with different races and grew courageous. Most of our days were passed at sea in struggle with storm and tempest and buccaneers, and we waxed valiant and strong to strike ; for those who tried to take our goods tried to rob us of our food, and with our food went our life. Now few of us live by trade. Most subsist on their incomes or on their official pay. Few leave Venice ; fewer still for distant lands ; and so, as we never see them close, we have come to believe that the rest of mankind are born with three hands, and thus we have grown cowards."



In quieter language that is just what the English merchants said to Foscari, and he reported home<sup>1</sup>:

"It is generally thought that in a very short time the trade of the Dutch with all parts of the world will multiply, for they are content with moderate gain and are richly supplied with excellent seamen, ships, money, everything that used to belong especially to Venice when her trade was flourishing. The leading merchants here point out to me that the trade of Venice has declined because Venetians have almost abandoned navigation, investing their money in estates. As matters now stand there is not, either in England or Holland, a ship so small that she could not out-fight the biggest Venetian and weather a storm with greater security. They also attack the build of Venetian craft, which, they say, is ill suited to face either the ocean or the pirates. They declare that twenty English sailors would show more fight than forty Venetians. Yet all these defects might be remedied; for the Venetians have a far shorter voyage to make and through a sea less infested by pirates. If they chose, they might build ships of a type that experience has approved, while the geographical position of Venice is hers and hers only."

The government was alive to the situation and attempted remedies. In 1506 the board of trade had been created because, in the words of the preamble, "Commerce is in disorder and because the cabinet has not time to take the matter into full consideration." The board soon (1514) recognized the true cause of decline in trade and revenue "owing to the city having lost its ancient flow of traffic, which now has taken another route." But down to 1610 the board remained strictly protectionist. As an example of its attitude, which can be gathered from the resolutions of the Senate as inspired by the board, we may take the

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Inghilterra, Dec. 2, 1611.

question of the currant trade. Elizabeth had granted to Accerbo Velutelli a monopoly of currants in England. Venice raised the export duty on currants for foreigners, and Elizabeth retaliated by imposing a heavy duty on Cretan sweet wines. The whole legislation as regards currants was rearranged with a view to preventing the English from trading direct with Zante; the people of Zante were ordered to send their currants, in Venetian bottoms, to Venice, and were forbidden to sell in Zante to English buyers. It was hoped that the English would thus be forced to come to Venice for their currants, and, under the two-thirds rule, would bring their produce intended for Eastern markets to that city. But nothing of the sort happened. The people of Zante came to an understanding with their British customers. They ran their currants across to Glarenza—in Turkish territory—by night, and the English laden there and at Patras without paying any Venetian dues at all.<sup>1</sup>

By 1609, however, certain considerations had led the board of trade to advocate free principles in dealing with commerce. The decline in the silk trade generally had alarmed the Senate, owing to the consequent fall in revenue—the Senate, as usual, kept its eye on revenue rather than on the sources of revenue—and it was proposed to raise the duties as the only way of meeting the decline. The Veronese protested. They declared that it was very doubtful whether the consumer in this case would pay the increased price—"for the purchasers are few and rich, while the producers are many, scattered, and poor; it will therefore rest with the purchaser, not with the seller, to fix the price." The board, to whom the protest had been referred, report against the increase of tax, a step which can only "weaken the trade"; they then go on to state the true cause of the decline. It is the free ports

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Collegio, Secreta, Esposizioni Principi, Aug. 22, 1607; Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Inghilterra, Dec. 12, 1608, Jan. 16, 1609, Jan. 22, 1609.

of Leghorn and Marseilles<sup>1</sup> that have ruined the wool trade and are now ruining the silk. The fall in revenue is due to the fact that the Dutch, English, and French are trading in their own ships to the East, where they buy silk and land it in Marseilles for Lyons, or take it to London for manufacture. A little later Aloise Contarini reports from London that "the English prefer the port of Leghorn, where they only pay a crown for every bale of goods, whatever its nature, and are allowed to bond it for a year; whereas the heavy import and export dues in Venice, coupled with the greater distance, induce them to avoid that port."

With these considerations in their mind, the board of trade presented the following report to the Senate on July 5, 1610<sup>2</sup>:

"The board of trade is called upon to give its opinion on the proposal submitted by Paulo Santorin for the repeal of the law forbidding any but Venetian citizens to trade from this port to the Levant.

"The advantages would be the opening of new firms in the Levant, and the introduction of fresh business into Venice. Such a scheme would in earlier times have carried no weight, but in the present state of affairs it appears to us that it should be adopted. . . . The fact that the Levant trade was reserved for Venetian citizens shows that that trade was considered to belong absolutely to Venice, and that there was no foreign competition. The government reserved for their own citizens the right to trade, and not for all of them, but only for the privileged class. This restriction, however, had the effect of keeping much capital out of the trade, and therefore injured the revenue. Nevertheless, had the trade continued as it was, the present proposal might have been laid aside.

<sup>1</sup> See also *Archivio di Stato*, Senato, Secreta, Dispacci, Inghilterra, July 14, 1611; Pindar to Foscarini on Venetian trade.

<sup>2</sup> *Archivio di Stato*, Papers of the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia under date.



But the trade has passed into the hands of foreigners. and foreign ships now sail straight to and from the Levant without touching Venice, preferring to trade with free ports, where they are favoured by the government.

“The reasons for the decline of Venetian trade are various, well known to everybody, and painful to discuss. We will only remark that our western trade is quite dead, our eastern trade reduced to a few ships, and even the dribble of goods that do reach us does not find a ready purchaser, because foreign merchants have removed their houses elsewhere. So that the Venetian market, once so famous and so replete with merchandise, which poured into it from every quarter of the globe and attracted foreign traders, is now all but annihilated.

“We consider that nothing will serve better to restore its lost vigour than to draw the merchants away from the ports that are competing with us; for it is obvious that the growth of those markets has been the ruin of ours. This cannot be done by force; it must be done by inducement, and we recommend the repeal of the present restrictions, leaving every one free to trade on conditions to be laid down hereafter. We further recommend the lightening of taxation, so as to allow the merchants of this market to compete with our rivals. This proposal should not be regarded with horror, but should be carefully weighed. It would certainly bring about striking benefits, and later on, if trade recovered sufficiently, some taxation might be reimposed. These two points—repeal of restrictions and relief from taxation—we commend to your attention. We hold it certain that traders would flock here if allowed to do so, both on the score of the safety of our waters and because of the geographical convenience for eastern trade and for the distribution of goods through Germany. Moreover, we have some inkling that these reforms are earnestly desired by the merchant class.”

This was the first enunciation of free trade ideas in Venice, and it is to be noted that the merchants were in favour of them. But the board of trade was in advance of the Senate in this matter. All free trade proposals were met by a stubborn, conservative objection to touch the *Leggi vecchie*. The attack was renewed, however, in 1658; the ruinous competition of the ports of Leghorn and Marseilles was pressed home, and in 1662 the Senate repealed the import duty, leaving Venice a free port for imports but still retaining the export duty. This was only a half-measure at best, and it erred in removing the less objectionable of the two burdens. The merchant would have willingly paid a light duty, for revenue, upon imports, but he disliked the nine per cent. *ad valorem* duty on exports. The error lay in this, that the geographical advantages of Venice as a port would have induced merchants to come there any way, in spite of import duties, but the retention of the export duty gave Leghorn the preference, as it hampered distribution from Venice, which was the merchants' chief object. In 1668 the States General asked for the repeal of the export duty. But the partial experiment of a free port was not working up to expectation, and the Senate declined to do anything more. Finally, in 1682, after a trial of twenty years—which showed a loss of one and a half million ducats, attributed wrongly to the fault of the free port principles—the Senate ordered a return to the old *Dazio da mar*, or import duty, and the experiment came to an end in failure that only served to confirm the protectionists, though the real causes were the half-measures adopted at the beginning, and the almost insuperable difficulty of recovering a lost trade.

That "foreign merchants would flock to Venice if allowed to do so," as the board of trade declared, seems to be proved by the persistence with which both Dutch and English strove to break down Venetian restrictions, thereby demonstrating the essential

importance of the geographical position. Failing to induce the Senate to make Venice a genuine free port, the States General endeavoured, through foreign merchants resident in Venice, to secure freedom of transit. But here, again, the feeling was against them. The Venetian government knew that Venice was losing her trade—nay! had lost it—yet they would not let the foreigner in, though their own board of trade insisted that the mere presence of foreign merchants, the transit and handling of their goods, must bring some benefit to the moribund market. Capello, who was an out-and-out protectionist, expressed the current view when he said, "Had Venice thought that by granting free transit she would draw to herself the trade of the Mediterranean she would have done so. But she knew that she would in that case become merely a forwarding agency, as Leghorn was for the English; that she would lose her position as an emporium and as a *luogo di contratto*." It was useless for the board of trade to say that she had already lost it. The Senate refused to grant transit.

The Dutch attack was followed by an English attempt to break down Venetian reluctance. The English merchants resident in Venice put forward four requests. They asked for the exemption from taxation of salted goods (they had herrings in their mind); freedom from the Gulf tax, a duty imposed in return for protection inside the Adriatic; delegates on the board of trade; free transit of goods for Zante (they meant English cloths which they would take out, returning with currants). These proposals met with no response, and in 1702 a commercial treaty between England and Venice was first suggested by the British ambassador, the Earl of Manchester. In 1706 he submitted to the Senate a draft of "articles for reciprocal benefit," one of which ensured a free port. The proposals were welcomed by the merchants and traders of Venice. They declared "that if the Senate would open the port, Venice would regain her



old position as an emporium. All your subjects and the whole business class desire this ; foreign merchants are panting for it ; they are only waiting this concession to pour themselves, their substance, and their families into Venice, and to drop Leghorn and Genoa ; one of which would be ruined, and the other reduced to the bare seashore it was before it became a free port." Such, says Capello, was the language current on the Venetian market and in the Venetian streets. But the attitude of the government was hostile. "There were those," to quote Capello, "who weighed the affair truly, and saw that a real good would be lost for a fancied gain, and that such suggestions came not from friends, but from those astute nations the English and the Dutch, who were only seeking to enlarge their own trade by entirely ruining the remainder of ours." The Senate referred the proposals to the board of trade with orders to report. The board entrusted the examination of the draft clauses to its financial secretary, John Calichiopolo. He at once remarked that the title, "Articles for reciprocal benefit," was specious, as there was no reciprocity about them ; a scrutiny of each clause proved their injury to navigation, revenue, industries. If facilities for Venetian goods could be obtained from England, then they might negotiate. This view was supported by the leading merchants—"Capi di Piazza"—who had been consulted, and who suggested a preference for Venetian oil, currants, and rice. Calichiopolo's observations were embodied in the board's report to the Senate, presented in May, 1707. Before the Senate had time to frame its reply to the British ambassador he had left, and the resident secretary, Cole, submitted eleven definite proposals as "preliminaries" for a commercial treaty. (1) As British shipping receives no protection from the Venetian fleet, the Gulf tax of 100 ducats per ship should be abolished. (2) The obligation to pay for a pilot from Istria into port, which amounts to 10 ducats, to be removed, except

when the pilot is actually employed. (3) British deserters may not sue in Venetian courts, and shall be consigned to their ships. (4) No compulsory loans to be exacted from British merchants in Venice. (5) To benefit Venetian commerce, transit of goods to be facilitated; port dues lowered, so as to cut out any other Mediterranean port. English dried fish to be exempt from export duty. No fixed price for British fish. (6) The establishment of a free port, as at Leghorn. (7) As Venetian cloth is inferior in quality, and "in order that the Illustrious Nobility of Venice may be dressed with the greatest possible decorum and splendour," British cloth may be introduced and sold on payment of a small duty. (8) As British shipping is sure to crowd to Venice, and should not be delayed there waiting for a return cargo, ships shall be allowed to lade at once for any port, even though Venetian ships be lading for the same destination. (9) As return cargoes will not always be found, British ships may make up cargo at any port in the Gulf. (10) No extra duties on currants. (11) British ships shall be exempt from the rule requiring all ships to discharge two-thirds of their cargo in Venice before they can reload. These proposals display free trade ideas, but it is obvious that in many cases—for example, in clauses seven, eight, nine, and eleven—they cut right across the traditions of Venetian commercial policy. The Senate, however, on the advice of the board of trade, authorized the opening of negotiations, though they refused categorically to discuss clauses two, four, seven, eight, and nine; and presented nine counter-demands, including immunity from search, reduction of duty on currants, equalization of British and Venetian duties, relief from the Trinity House dues and the Levant Company dues, restoration of the oil trade. A conference between the British secretary and the board took place, and the secretary promised to forward the Venetian counter-demands, but added that some of these contravened

the Navigation Act. No answer came from England, however, and the Venetians made up their minds that England wanted concessions, but would grant none. "The matter dropped," says Capello, "and we forgot all about it. Would to God England had! For she kept both her own eleven points and our nine before her eyes, resolutely determined to secure the one and to refuse the other; and she did." The persistence of English merchants in Venice, and the apathy of the Venetian Senate, led eventually and gradually to the reduction of the tax on dried fish and to the abolition of the Gulf tax. English and Dutch cloths almost succeeded in getting in; leave had been granted in 1733, and thanks returned, when the French stepped forward and claimed a like privilege, or its refusal to England. The English secured the right to lade anywhere in the Gulf by simply taking it. Concurrent right to lade in Venice even if Venetian ships were also lading for same destination they secured partly because they were the sole importers of many necessities, and could dictate terms, and partly because theirs were the only ships trading to ports of any distance and importance. In fact, the British had the port and the market of Venice, such as it was, entirely at their mercy.

The board of trade made one last effort in the direction of freer trading. In September, 1733, it proposed to remove the stifling export duty. The Senate applauded the zeal of the board, but ordered a further inquiry on certain points. Capello, with two others, was appointed an extra member, and being a convinced protectionist successfully opposed the suggestion.

The whole question continued to occupy the attention of the government, who called for reports. The last of these, the report presented by Andrea Tron in 1784, gives us a full and lively statement of the case. Tron, setting out to examine the condition of commerce in Venice, asserts at once "that agri-



culture, industries, and trade are so intimately connected that to discuss industries without bearing agriculture and commerce in mind would be like arguing without premises or conclusions. Venice herself presents the most remarkable example of this interdependence, for she, first and alone, gave to the world the spectacle of an entire nation concentrated in a single city—without territory and without natural products—and yet rising to wealth and greatness by the application of principles which other nations noted and copied to her injury." Tron declares the decline in Venetian industries to be universal, and that it began in 1645, at the time of the war of Candia, and has gone on steadily owing to the competition of other nations in the Levant. The mercantile marine is at a low ebb, imports far exceed exports, the Venetian merchant has almost disappeared, and agency business is almost the only business done. The principles of protection, which made Venice great, have been learned by other nations, and applied against her. Tron's remedy was to endeavour to induce capitalists to embark once more in commerce. He suggested that the government should encourage the establishment of trading companies. A proclamation in this sense was issued and a company formed; but the fall of the Republic was now close at hand, and the experiment never had a fair chance.

To resume. Venice owed her commercial success to her geographical position, and to her energy in seizing and keeping the great trade route of the world. When the course of events changed that route, the value of her position was greatly diminished. A proof is afforded by the renewed activity of the port since the opening of the Suez Canal, which has restored to Venice the value of her site. She was not primarily an industrial state; she was an emporium, and her carrying trade was essential to the feeding of that emporium. In her case M. Yves Guyot's dictum that "*la fortune d'une nation c'est le*

pouvoir d'achat des autres nations" hardly holds. The purchasing power of other nations grew steadily, but that did not help Venice when her store of foreign goods ceased to be full. She was essentially a city state, she never really became a territorial state. Though forced on to the mainland by stress of circumstances, the need for a food-growing area, and the necessity to command the passes so as to ensure an outlet for her goods—she never welded her mainland possessions into one homogeneous whole with herself. Had she done so, it is possible that the silk of Verona, the wool of Brescia, Bergamo, and Padua, the iron of Agordo, the arms factories of the Bresciano might have converted her into a genuine industrial state, and given her the commodities other nations sought, and therefore the chance of applying the doctrines of free trade. But such a fusion never took place. Her subject cities and territories were all regarded as merely feeders for the *Città Dominante*. She herself was a manufacturer to a considerable extent, and there, perhaps, had she shown more elasticity, had she entertained the freer commercial ideas of her own board of trade, she might have saved her industries by keeping the door open for raw material. But her closed port sent raw material for silk and woollen industries to Leghorn and Marseilles, and hampered her activity at home. Her conservatism refused to yield; she could not bring herself to break from the *leggi antiche*; she never learned the lesson that "there is no pre-established harmony between economic world interests and national well-being," nor would she admit "that the character of fiscal policy should vary with circumstances."

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